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REMINISCENCES OF SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER

DEAN RAMSAY

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EDITOR'S NOTE

"The wise old man who gleaned the
social tale
And thoughtful jest and roguish whim
that grew
Freely on Scotland's soil. . . ."

The above lines appeared in one of two sonnets written by the late Professor Blackie on the publication of the twentieth edition of Dean Ramsay's celebrated book. They aptly express the particular quality which has made the book and its author beloved by two generations of readers. No work descriptive of the life and character of a people has ever been written with more gaiety of spirit, more tenderness, and more truth.

Its merits are, indeed, so patent that, after a single reading one does not wonder at the extraordinary sales of the book since its first publication in 1858. Its success, however, is not in the many editions it has passed through, even since Blackie wrote his sonnets, but rather in the innumerable Scottish hearts it has lightened, and united "in the kindly feelings of Auld Lang Syne."

Edward Bannerman Ramsay, LL.D., was born in 1793. He was educated at Durham and at Cambridge, and became curate of St. George's, Edinburgh. In 1841 he was appointed Dean of Edinburgh, which office he held until his lamented death in 1872.

The world loves a good story-teller, and the people a hearty laugh. In this book we find the story-teller, the laughter, and—an occasional tear.

REMINISCENCES
OF
SCOTTISH LIFE
AND
CHARACTER

BY

DEAN RAMSAY
M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

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TO HIS COUNTRYMEN WHO LOVE SCOTLAND, THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR, IN THE FOND HOPE OF UNITING SCOTTISH HEARTS IN THE KINDLY FEELINGS OF

"AULD LANG SYNE."

CONTENTS

		PAGE
PREFACE TO THE NINTH EDITION		13
CHAPTER 1.	INTRODUCTORY	17
2.	ON RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES	24
3.	ON OLD SCOTTISH CONVIVIALITY	61
4.	ON THE OLD SCOTTISH DOMESTIC SERVANT	83
5.	ON HUMOUR PROCEEDING FROM SCOTTISH LANGUAGE, INCLUDING SCOTTISH PROVERBS	99
6.	ON SCOTTISH STORIES OF WIT AND HUMOUR	173
CONCLUDING REMARKS		266
INDEX		277

PREFACE

TO THE NINTH EDITION

In preparing another edition of *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*, I am anxious to explain in a few words wherein the present edition of the work differs from those which have been already published, and further to give my reasons for once more putting myself forward in the character of a collector of national peculiarities. The original intention of this little work was to illustrate certain phases of Scottish language, of Scottish humour, and turns of thought, which, though very curious and entirely national, had for some time past been disappearing from amongst us, and passing away so fast that, to younger members of the present generation, they have become nearly obsolete.

I had recollections of many quaint and humorous anecdotes illustrative of this subject drawn from *personal* reminiscences of early days in Angus and the Mearns, a fruitful field for gathering such examples, and I commenced by bringing these forward in a lecture, which, in the year 1857, was published under the title of *Some Changes in Social Life and Habits*. Since that time, I have received many communications from Scotchmen scattered all over the world, supplying additional materials, and suggesting numerous illustrations of Scottish life in by-gone times. These were made use of in successive editions of the work. I embodied a further selection from these in a second series, published in 1861; and in 1862 the first and second series were formed into one volume, and published together, but I never had sufficient leisure to make a methodical

arrangement of the whole materials. I have been anxious for some time to remedy this rather clumsy form of publication, and to work up the old materials, together with some of the communications received since the edition of 1862, into a compendious and continuous narrative, keeping more strictly in view the original purpose of illustrating past characteristics of Scottish social life. Bearing this in mind, some reminiscences of a more purely *historical* character have been excluded, which, though in themselves most interesting, were perhaps better adapted to the pages of Mr. Robert Chambers and Professor Cosmo Innes. Some stories, which on repetition seemed rather *fushionless*, have been replaced by others which have more *smeddum*.

On the whole, I think this ninth issue of the *Reminiscences* has a stronger claim to the appellation of a People's Edition than any previous one. Perhaps I may add, it forms a more *readable* volume. The main object is more distinctly kept in view, many fresh and pithy anecdotes are added ; and in taking this leave of my readers, I can truly say my earnest desire has been to amuse an idle hour of their busy time, or in a day of sorrow to teach the heart for a few moments to forget its sadness by resuscitating some glimpses of that quaint and original humour which must have made the society of Scotland a hundred years ago so racy, and so different from the more measured and common-place intercourse of our present time. We may well imagine the zest given to the evening party for tea and cards, to the presbytery dinner, the farmer's ordinary on a market day, or to any other social meeting where the interlocutors were such persons and saying such things as are recorded in these pages. It would be a pleasant reflection to me if I could indulge the hope of having introduced more of this enjoyment into circles where Scottish humour had become little known and little felt. But my far *greatest* gratification would be to think that I might hope to supply innocent amusement to the

inhabitants of Scotland's farm-houses, and of Scotland's humbler dwellings. In that hope the present edition of these Reminiscences has been compiled and put forth. In that hope I now offer it as a memorial and a record of national and characteristic humour. Amongst Scotchmen long separated from the land of their birth these anecdotes have awakened many home feelings, and recalled many memories of early days. I have been deeply gratified by receiving such assurances from nearly all quarters of the globe. They do not cease to remember us, and we must all feel a warm interest in our countrymen whose lot is cast in distant climes. It is indeed most touching to hear of the power of Scottish commemorations, of Scottish poetry, and Scottish song, upon the feelings of the exiled children of Caledonia. Like the captive Israelite, they can often take up the lamentation once poured forth by the waters of Babylon—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning."

23 Ainslie Place,
May, 1863.

REMINISCENCES
OF
SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER

CHAPTER THE FIRST

INTRODUCTORY

MANY things connected with our Scottish manners of former times are fast becoming obsolete, and we seem at present to be placed in a juncture when some Scottish traditions are in danger of being lost entirely. Being impressed with this truth, I made my own *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character* the subject of a lecture, which was delivered as one of the series given at Ulbster Hall in 1857 by different contributors, some of whom were amongst the most distinguished of our citizens. The idea met with so much approval, that the lecture was published. Since that time the materials have been growing under my hand, and I received many contributions on the subject, which were soon embodied in a second edition. The public interest continued, and brought forth many flattering and pleasing communications from various quarters; and I would here express how deeply I have been gratified by the sympathy with which my humble endeavours to exhibit a phase of Scottish social life have been received. I still think that it forms a most interesting chapter of our *domestic national* annals. In fact, if it were not presumption, I might be inclined to consider myself a fellow-labourer with Mr. Robert Chambers; as in a very humble degree, and in a very limited sphere, this little volume takes a portion of the

same field of illustration which he has selected. I should consider myself to have done well if I shall direct any of my readers to his able volumes. Whosoever wishes to know what this country really was in times past, and to learn with a precision beyond what is supplied by the narratives of history, the details of the ordinary current of our social, civil, and national life, must carefully study the *Domestic Annals of Scotland*. Never before were a nation's domestic features so thoroughly portrayed. Of those features the specimens of quaint Scottish humour still remembered are unlike anything else, but they are fast becoming obsolete, and my motive for this publication has been an endeavour to preserve marks of the past which would of themselves soon become obliterated, and to supply the rising generation with pictures of social life, faded and indistinct to their eyes, but the strong lines of which an older race still remember. By thus coming forward at a favourable moment, no doubt many beautiful specimens of Scottish Minstrelsy have in this manner been preserved from oblivion by the timely exertions of Bishop Percy, Ritson, Walter Scott, and Professor Aytoun. Lord Macaulay, in his preface to *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, shews very powerfully the tendency in all that lingers in the memory to become obsolete, and he does not hesitate to say that "Sir Walter Scott was but *just in time* to save the precious relics of the minstrelsy of the Border."

My esteemed friend Lord Neaves, who, it is well known, combines, with his great legal knowledge and high literary acquirements, a keen sense of the humorous, has sometimes pleasantly complained of my drawing so many of my specimens of Scottish humour from sayings and doings of Scottish ministers. There can be no doubt that the older school of our national clergy supply some most amusing anecdotes. They were a shrewd and observant race. They lived amongst their

own people from year to year, and understood the Scottish type of character. Their retired habits and familiar intercourse with their parishioners gave rise to many quaint and racy communications. They were excellent men, well suited to their pastoral work, and did much good amongst their congregations; for it should be always remembered that a national church requires a sympathy and resemblance between the pastors and the flocks. Both will be found to change together. Nothing could be further from my mind in recording these stories, than the idea of casting ridicule upon such an order of men. My own feelings as a Scotchman, with all their ancestral associations, lead me to cherish their memory with pride and deep interest. I may appeal also to the fact that many contributions to this volume are voluntary offerings from distinguished clergymen of the Church of Scotland, as well as of the Free Church and of other Presbyterian communities. Indeed, no persons enjoy these stories more than ministers themselves. I recollect many years ago travelling to Perth in the old stage-coach days, and enjoying the society of a Scottish clergyman, who was a most amusing companion, and full of stories, the quaint humour of which accorded with his own disposition. When we had come through Glen Farg, my companion pointed out that we were in the parish of Dron. With much humour he introduced an anecdote of a brother minister not of a brilliant order of mind, who had terminated in this place a course of appointments in the Church, the names of which, at least, were of an ominous character for a person of unimaginative temperament. The worthy man had been brought up at the school of *Dunse*—had been made assistant at *Dull*, a parish near Aberfeldy, in the Presbytery of Weem, and had here ended his days and his clerical career as minister of *Dron*.

Sir Walter Scott, in the dedication to the King (George the Fourth) of his collected edition of the Waverley

Novels, with much complacency records the fact that "the perusal of them has been supposed, in some instances, to have succeeded in amusing hours of relaxation, or relieving those of languor, pain, or anxiety." No doubt it is a source of allowable satisfaction to an author to think that he has in any degree, even the lowest and the most humble, contributed to the innocent recreation of a world where care and sorrow so generally prevail. The work of preparing these Reminiscences has sometimes succeeded in drawing off the mind of the author from sad and painful recollections of his own domestic trials, and he may perhaps be permitted to state, that in several cases he has received assurance that these pages have beguiled an hour of languor and debility; that they have in distant lands recalled many pleasant associations with the past, and have given a permanent and agreeable impression of a pleasantry and humour exclusively and essentially of a Scottish type and character.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that these desultory records were never intended to treat of the changes which have taken place amongst us during the last half century, in literature or philosophy, in laws, commerce, manufactures, or in the deeper phases of our national character. I treat of changes and of transitions which lie rather upon the surface of social life. In fact, I speak of what, to a great degree, I can verify from my own experience—what I have not seen and known in my own person I generally narrate from the *direct* testimony of others. I can myself go back in memory for fifty years; and therefore these observations, trivial and superficial as they may be, I might name, in imitation of my distinguished great-great-great-uncle, Bishop Burnett, and call them *Memoirs of my own Time*, or, more correctly, to follow a recent example of collected reminiscences (that of the late lamented Lord Cockburn), *Memorials of my Time*. I have recorded the following remarks in the way of an *experiment*, hoping

that it might form a precedent or example for others to take up the question of changes amongst us, and for those to state results of their observation who have had more experience than mine (as I was only an occasional visitor to my own country from the age of eight to the age of thirty), who have more opportunities of judging, and who are possessed of far better powers of description. As Lord Cockburn has observed, "A change has been going on for a long time."—"The feelings and habits which had prevailed at the Union, and which had left so many picturesque peculiarities on the Scottish character, could not survive the enlarged intercourse with England and the world." Much of this change had of course taken place before any of the present generation can remember. Much has been done in my own recollection, and now there remains only comparatively the slighter shades of difference to be assimilated, and soon there will be little to notice. Now, a subject like this can only be illustrated by a copious application of anecdotes which must shew the features of the past. And let me premise that I make use of anecdotes not for the purpose of telling a good story, but solely in the way of *illustration*. I am quite certain that there was an originality, a dry and humorous mode of viewing persons and events quite *peculiar* to the older Scottish characters. And I am equally certain, that their peculiar humour can only be exhibited in examples. I have just been supplied, by two much valued and kind friends, with anecdotes highly illustrative of what I have endeavoured to record; from Mr. Erskine of Linlathan, I have received the following:—Mr. Erskine recollects an old housekeeper at Airth who belonged to this class of character. A speech of this Mrs. Henderson was preserved in the family as having been made by her at the time of the execution of Louis XVI. in 1793. She was noticing the violent emotions exhibited by Mr. Bruce of Kinnaird, the Abyssinian traveller, at the sad event

which had just taken place, and added, in the following quaint and caustic terms, "There's Kinnaird greeting as if there were nae a saunt on earth but himsel' and the king o' France." How utterly unlike anything that would be said on such an occasion by an English person in the same position in life!

The other anecdote (which has just been sent by a kind correspondent from Aberdeenshire) I introduce here as a pure sample of the Scottish humour we are speaking of. It seems to me to possess more than the ordinary amount of those racy qualities which so often distinguished the older class of Scottish parish functionaries. The story is recorded as having been told by the late Rev. Alexander Allardice, minister of Forgue in Aberdeenshire, who possessed an unusual vein of dry caustic humour, and who told stories of that description in a most relishable way.

A neighbouring minister was to assist Mr. Allardice, and arrived at the manse on Saturday, where he was to sleep, and take the duty on Sunday following. He was a conceited youth—a frothy, declamatory preacher—and, as a stranger, anxious to make a great sensation in the county. After dinner, he strolled out into the churchyard, and encountered John the beddal and parish oracle engaged in digging a grave—and much of a humorist in his way—moreover, a formidable critic of the theological soundness of the neighbouring ministers. Our young divine having been very recently *placed*, supposed himself to be personally unknown to the Forgue functionary. Accordingly he began to pump Beddal John as to the opinion held of the brethren around who had assisted at Forgue. To query after query John gave out his unvarying oracular response, "Na, sir, we dinna like him; he's nae soun' "—and "we dinna like him eather; *he's* nae soun'," clinching every decision with the "yerk" of a spadeful of earth on the grave's brink. At last the

reverend pumper having exhausted the circle of his brethren of the Presbytery, and secretly gratified, no doubt, with this summary and unqualified testimony against them, anxious to hear what was thought in the country side about himself, where he rather flattered himself he was creating a sensation, and trusting to his incognito (though John was perfectly aware who his colloquist was), ventured to ask, "Well, now, the parish of——has got a famous preacher, the Rev. Mr.——, what do you think of *him*? *is he* '*soun*'"? "'Od, sir," replied John, with a sly twinkle, and resting for a moment on his spade, "I hinna heard him mysel'; but folk that hae, say *he's* A' *soun*'." John recommenced digging with redoubled diligence, and exit the reverend querist, feeling, we may fancy, rather small.

If my anecdotes should occasionally excite amusement or even laughter, there is no harm done; but let it be remembered this is not the *object*. The object, as I say, is to illustrate the sort of quaint humour we are losing. In short, whatever tends to illustrate changes—to mark times that are gone—I have not hesitated to use.

We have now, therefore, to deal with common events and with changes which, though in themselves really deep and important, often appear to the observer to affect only what is external; and as we must have a classification or arrangement of the topics on which changes are to be marked, I would propose to record some Reminiscences on the following subjects:—

On Religious Feelings and Religious Observances.

On Scottish Conviviality of the past.

On the old Scottish Domestic Servant.

On the Humour and peculiarities of the Scottish Language, including Scottish Proverbs.

On Scottish stories of Wit and Humour.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

ON RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

On this subject we would speak with deference. We have no intention of entering, in this volume, upon those great questions which are connected with certain church movements amongst us, or with national peculiarities of faith and discipline. It is impossible, however, to overlook entirely the fact of a gradual relaxation, which has gone on for some years, of the sterner features of the Calvinistic school of theology—at any rate, of keeping its theoretic peculiarities more in the background. What we have to notice, in these pages, are changes in the feelings with regard to religion and religious observances, which have appeared upon the *exterior* of society—the changes which belong to outward habits rather than to internal feelings. Of such changes many have taken place within my own experience. Scotland has ever borne the character of a moral and religious country; and the mass of the people are a more church-going race than the masses of English population. I am not at all prepared to say that in the middle and lower ranks of life, our countrymen have undergone much change in regard to religious observances. But there can be no question that amongst the upper classes there are manifestations connected with religion now, which some years ago were not thought of. The attendance of *men* on public worship is of itself an example of the change we speak of. I am afraid that when Walter Scott described Monkbarns as being with difficulty "hounded out" to hear the sermons of good Mr. Blattergowl, he wrote from a knowledge of the habits

of church going then generally prevalent amongst Scottish lairds. The late Bishop Sandford told me that when he first came to Edinburgh—I suppose fifty years ago—few gentlemen attended church—very few indeed were seen at the communion—so much so that it was a matter of conversation when a male communicant, not an aged man, was observed at the table for the first time. Sydney Smith, when preaching in Edinburgh some forty years ago, seeing how almost exclusively congregations were made up of ladies, took for his text the verse from the Psalms, "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord;" and with that touch of the facetious which marked everything he did, laid the emphasis on the word "men." Looking round the congregation and saying, "Oh that *men* would therefore praise the Lord," implying that he used the word, not to describe the human species generally, but the male individuals as distinguished from the female portion. In regard to attendance by young men, both at church and communion, a marked change has taken place in my own experience. In fact, there is an attention excited towards church subjects, which, thirty years ago, would have been hardly credited. Nor is it only in connection with churches and church services that these changes have been brought forth, but an interest has been raised on the subject from Bible societies, missionary associations at home and abroad, schools and reformatory institutions, most of which, as regard active operation, have grown up during fifty years.

Nor should I omit to mention, what I trust may be considered as a change belonging to religious feeling, viz., that conversation is now conducted without that accompaniment of those absurd and unmeaning oaths which were once considered an essential embellishment of polite discourse. I distinctly recollect an elderly gentleman, when describing the opinion of a refined and polished female upon a particular point, putting into her mouth

an unmistakeable round oath as the natural language in which people's sentiments and opinions would be ordinarily conveyed. This is a change wrought in men's feelings, which all must hail with great pleasure. Putting out of sight for a moment the sin of such a practice, and the bad influence it must have had upon all emotions of reverence for the name and attributes of the Divine Being, and the natural effect of profane swearing, to "harden a' within," we might marvel at the utter folly and incongruity of making swearing accompany every expression of anger, or surprise, or of using oaths as mere expletives in common discourse. A quaint anecdote, descriptive of such senseless ebullition, I have from a friend who mentioned the names of parties concerned :— A late Duke of Athole had invited a well-known character, a writer of Perth, to come up and meet him at Dunkeld for the transaction of some business. The Duke mentioned the day and hour when he should receive the man of law, who accordingly came punctually at the appointed time and place. But the Duke had forgotten the appointment, and gone to the hill, from which he could not return for some hours. A highlander present described the Perth writer's indignation, and his mode of shewing it, by a most elaborate course of swearing. "But whom did he swear at?" was the inquiry made of the narrator, who replied, "Oh, he didna sweer at ony thing parteecular, but juist stude in ta middle of ta road and swoor at lairge." I have from a friend also an anecdote which shews how entirely at one period the practice of swearing had become familiar even to female ears when mixed up with the intercourse of social life. A sister had been speaking of her brother as much addicted to this habit— "Our John sweers awfu', and we try to correct him; but," she added in a candid and apologetic tone, "nae doubt it *is* a great set off to conversation."

This is the place to notice a change which has taken

place in regard to some questions of taste in the building and embellishing of Scottish places of worship. Some years back there was a great jealousy of ornament in connection with churches and church services, and, in fact, all such embellishments were considered as marks of a departure from the simplicity of old Scottish worship, —they were distinctive of Episcopacy as opposed to the severer modes of Presbyterianism. The late Sir William Forbes used to give an account of a conversation, indicative of this feeling, which he had overheard between an Edinburgh inhabitant and his friend from the country. They were passing St. John's, which had just been finished, and the countryman asked, "Whatna kirk was that?" "Oh," said the townsman, "that is an English chapel," meaning Episcopalian. "Ay," said his friend, "there'll be a walth o' *images* there." But, if unable to sympathise with architectural church ornament and embellishment, how much less could they sympathise with the performance of divine service which included such musical accompaniments as intoning, chanting, and anthems? On the first introduction of Tractarianism into Scotland, the full choir service had been established in an Episcopal church, where a noble family had adopted those views, and carried them out regardless of expense. The lady who had been instrumental in getting up these musical services was very anxious that a favourite female servant of the family—a Presbyterian of the old school—should have an opportunity of hearing them; accordingly, she very kindly took her down to church in the carriage, and on returning asked her what she thought of the music, etc., "Ou, it's verra bonny, verra bonny; but oh, my lady, it's an awfu' way of spending the Sabbath." The good woman could only look upon the whole thing as a musical performance. The organ was a great mark of distinction between Episcopalian and Presbyterian places of worship. I have heard of an old lady describing an Episcopalian

clergyman, without any idea of disrespect, in these terms :—" Oh, he is a whistle-kirk minister." Of late years, however, a spirit of greater tolerance of such things has been growing up amongst us,—a greater tolerance, I suspect, even of organs and liturgies. In fact, we may say a new era has begun in Scotland as to church architecture and church ornaments. The use of stained glass in churches—forming memorial windows for the departed,[1] a free use of crosses as architectural ornaments, and restoration of ancient edifices, indicate a revolution of feeling regarding this question. Beautiful and expensive churches are rising everywhere, in connection with various denominations. It is not long since the building or repairing a new church, or the repairing and adapting an old church, implied in Scotland simply a production of the greatest possible degree of ugliness and bad taste at the least possible expense, and certainly never included any notion of ornament in the details. Now, large sums are expended on places of worship without reference to creed. First-rate architects are employed. Fine Gothic structures are produced. The rebuilding of the Greyfriars' Church, the restoration of South Leith Church and of Glasgow Cathedral, the very bold experiment of adopting a style little known amongst us, the pure Lombard, in a church for Dr. W. L. Alexander, on George IV. Bridge, Edinburgh ; the really splendid Free Church, St. Mary's, in Albany Street, with a Gothic mansion attached, and many similar cases, mark the spirit of the times regarding the application of what is beautiful in art to the service of religion. One might hope that changes such as these in the feelings, tastes, and associations, would have a beneficial effect in bringing the worshippers themselves into a more genial

[1] Distinguished examples of these are to be found in the New Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh, and in the Cathedral of Glasgow ; to say nothing of the beautiful specimens in St. John's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh.

spirit of forbearance with each other. A friend of mine used to tell a story of an honest builder's views of church differences, which was very amusing, and quaintly professional. An English gentleman, who had arrived in a Scottish country town, was walking about to examine the various objects which presented themselves, and observed two rather handsome places of worship in course of erection nearly opposite to each other. He addressed a person, who happened to be the contractor for the chapels, and asked, "What was the difference between these two places which were springing up so close to each other?"—meaning, of course, the difference of the theological tenets of the two congregations. The contractor, who thought only of architectural differences, innocently replied, "there may be a difference of sax feet in length, but there's no aboon a few inches in the breadth." Would that all our religious differences could be brought within so narrow a compass!

It might be a curious question to consider how far motives founded on mere taste or sentiment may have operated in creating an interest towards religion, and in making it a more prominent and popular question than it was in the early portion of the present century. There are in this country two causes which have combined in producing these effects:—1st. The great disruption which took place in the Church of Scotland no doubt called forth an attention to the subject which stirred up the public, and made religion at any rate a topic of deep interest for discussion and for partisanship. Men's minds were not *allowed* to remain in the torpid condition of a past generation. 2nd. The æsthetic movement in religion, which some years since was made in England, has, of course, had its influence in Scotland, and many who shewed little concern about religion, whilst it was merely a question of doctrines, of precepts, and of worship, threw themselves keenly into the question when it became

associated with ceremonial, and music, and high art. New ecclesiastical associations have been presented to Scottish tastes and feelings. With some minds, attachment to the Church is attachment to her Gregorian tones, jewelled chalices, lighted candles, embroidered altar-cloths, silver crosses, processions, copes, albs, and chasubles. But from whatever cause it proceeds, a great change has taken place in the general interest excited towards ecclesiastical questions. Religion now has numerous associations with the ordinary current of human life. In times past it was kept more as a thing apart. There was a false delicacy which made people shrink from encountering appellations that were usually bestowed upon those who made a more prominent religious profession than the world at large.

A great change has taken place in this respect with persons of *all* shades of religious opinions. With an increased attention to the *externals* of religion, we believe that in many points the heart has been more exercised also. Take, as an example, the practice of family prayer. Many excellent and pious households of the former generation would not venture upon the observance, I am afraid, because they were in dread of the sneer. There was a foolish application of the terms "Methodist," "saints," "over-righteous," where the practice was observed. It was to take up a rather decided position in the neighbourhood, and I can testify, that less than fifty years ago, a family would have been marked and talked of for a usage of which now throughout the country the *exception* is rather the unusual circumstance. A little anecdote from recollections in my own family will furnish a good illustration of a state of feeling on this point now happily unknown. In a northern town of the east coast, where the earliest recollections of my life go back, there was usually a detachment of a regiment, who were kindly received and welcomed to the society, which in the winter

months was very full and very gay. There was the usual measure of dining, dancing, supping, card-playing, and gossipping, which prevailed in country towns at the time. The officers were of course an object of much interest to the natives, and their habits were much discussed. A friend was staying in the family who partook a good deal of the Athenian temperament, viz., delight in hearing and telling some new thing. On one occasion she burst forth in great excitement with the intelligence that "Sir Nathaniel Duckinfield, the officer in command of the detachment, had family prayers *every* morning!" A very near and dear relative of mine, knowing the tendency of the lady to gossip, pulled her up with the exclamation: "How can you repeat such things, Miss Ogilvy; nothing in the world but the ill-natured stories of Montrose!!" The remark was made quite innocently and unconsciously of the bitter satire it conveyed upon the feeling of the place. The "ill-nature" of these stories was true enough, because ill-nature was the motive of those who raised them; not because it is an ill-natured thing of itself to say of a family that they have household worship, but the ill-nature consisted in their intending to throw out a sneer and a sarcasm upon a subject where all such reflections are unbecoming and indecorous. It is one of the best proofs of change of habits and associations on this matter, that the anecdote, exquisite as it is for our purpose, will hardly be understood by many of our young friends, or, at least, happily has lost much of its force and pungency.

These remarks apply perhaps more especially to the state of religious feeling amongst the upper classes of society. Though I am not aware of so much change in the religious habits of the Scottish peasantry, still the elders have yielded much from the sternness of David Deans; and upon the whole view of the question there have been many and great changes in the Scottish people

during the last sixty years. It could hardly be otherwise, when we consider the increased facilities of communication between the two countries, a facility which extends to the introduction of English books upon religious subjects. The most popular and engaging works connected with the Church of England have now a free circulation in Scotland, and it is impossible that such productions as the *Christian Year*, for example, and many others—whether for good or bad is not now the question—should not produce their effects upon minds trained in the strictest school of Calvinistic theology. I should be disposed to *extend* the boundaries of this division, and to include under "Religious Feelings and Religious Observances" many anecdotes which belong perhaps rather indirectly than directly to the subject. Thus it has struck me that on a subject closely allied with religious feelings a great change has taken place in Scotland during a period of less than fifty years—I mean the attention paid to cemeteries as depositories of the mortal remains of those who have departed. In my early days I never recollect seeing any efforts made for the embellishment and adornment of our churchyards; if tolerably secured by fences, enough had been done. The English and Welsh practices of planting flowers, keeping the turf smooth and dressed over the graves of friends, were quite unknown. Indeed, I suspect such attention fifty years ago would have been thought by the sterner Presbyterians as somewhat savouring of superstition. The account given by Sir W. Scott, in *Guy Mannering*, of an Edinburgh burial-place was universally applicable to Scottish sepulchres.[1] A very different state of matters has grown up within the

[1] "This was a square enclosure in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, guarded on one side by a veteran angel without a nose, and having only one wing, who had the merit of having maintained his post for a century, while his comrade cherub, who had stood sentinel on the corresponding pedestal, lay a broken trunk, among the hemlock, burdock, and nettles which grew in gigantic luxuriance around the walls of the mausoleum."

last few years. Cemeteries and churchyards are now as carefully ornamented in Scotland as in England. Shrubs, flowers, smooth turf, and neatly-kept gravel walks, are a pleasing accompaniment to head-stones, crosses, and varied forms of monumental memorials, in freestone, marble, and granite. Nay, more than these, not unfrequently we see an imitation of French sentiment, in wreaths of "everlasting" placed over graves as emblems of immortality; and in one of our Edinburgh cemeteries, I have seen these enclosed in glass cases, to preserve them from the effects of wind and rain.

In consequence of neglect, the unprotected state of churchyards was evident from the number of stories in circulation connected with the circumstance of timid and excited passengers going amongst the tombs of the village. The following, amongst others, has been communicated. The *locale* of the story is unknown, but it is told of a weaver who, after enjoying his potations, pursued his way home through the churchyard, his vision and walking somewhat impaired. As he proceeded, he diverged from the path, and unexpectedly stumbled into a partially made grave. Stunned for a while, he lay in wonder at his descent, and after some time he got out, but he had not proceeded much farther when a similar calamity befell him. At this second fall, he was heard, in a tone of wonder and surprise, to utter the following exclamation, referring to what he considered the untenanted graves, "Ay! ir ye a' up an' awa?"

The kindly feelings and interest of the pastoral relation always formed a very pleasing intercourse between minister and people. I have received from an anonymous correspondent an anecdote illustrative of this happy connection, for which he vouches as authentic:—

John Brown, Burgher minister at Whitburn (son of the commentator, and father of the late Rev. Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, and grandfather of the present

accomplished M.D., of the same name, author of *Rab and his Friends*, etc.), in the early part of the century was travelling on a small sheltie[1] to attend the summer sacrament at Haddington. Between Musselburgh and Tranent he overtook one of his own people. "What are ye dain' here, Janet, and whaur ye gaun in this warm weather?" "Deed sir," quo Janet, "I'm gaun to Haddington *for the occasion*,[2] an' expeck to hear ye preach this efternoon." "Very weel, Janet, but whaur ye gaun to sleep?" "I dinna ken, sir, but Providence is aye kind, an'll provide a bed." On Mr. Brown jogged, but kindly thought of his humble follower; accordingly after service in the afternoon, before pronouncing the blessing, he said from the pulpit, "Whaur's the auld wifie that followed me frae Whitburn?" "Here I'm sir," uttered a shrill voice from a back seat. "Aweel," said Mr. Brown, "I have fand ye a bed; ye're to sleep wi' Johnnie Fife's lass."

There was at all times amongst the older Scottish peasantry a bold assertion of their religious opinions, and strong expression of their feelings. The spirit of the Covenanters lingered amongst the aged people whom I remember, but which time has considerably softened down. We have some recent authentic instances of this readiness in Scotchmen to bear testimony to their principles—

A friend has informed me that the late Lord Rutherfurd often told with much interest of a rebuke which he received from a shepherd, near Bonaly, amongst the Pentlands. He had entered into conversation with him, and was complaining bitterly of the weather, which prevented him enjoying his visit to the country, and said hastily and unguardedly, "What a damned mist!" and then expressed his wonder how or for what purpose there should have been such a thing created as east wind.

[1] A Shetland pony. [2] The Lord's Supper.

The shepherd, a tall, grim figure, turned sharp round upon him. "What ails you at the mist, sir; it weets the sod, it slockens the yowes, and"—adding with much solemnity —"it's God's wull;" and turned away with lofty indignation. Lord Rutherfurd used to repeat this with much candour as a fine specimen of rebuke from a sincere and simple mind.

There was something very striking in the homely, quaint, and severe expressions on religious subjects which marked the old-fashioned piety of persons shadowed forth in Sir Walter Scott's Davie Deans. We may add to the rebuke of the Shepherd of Bonaly, of Lord Rutherfurd's remark about the east wind, his answer to Lord Cockburn, the proprietor of Bonaly. He was sitting on the hill-side with the shepherd, and observing the sheep reposing in the coldest situation, he observed to him, "John, if I were a sheep, I would lie on the other side of the hill." The shepherd answered, "Ay, my lord, but if ye had been a sheep ye would hae had mair sense."

Of such men as this shepherd were formed the elders—a class of men who were marked by strong features of character, and who, in former times, bore a distinguished part in all church matters.

The old Scottish elder was in fact quite as different a character from the modern elder, as the old Scottish minister was from the modern pastor. These good men were not disposed to hide their lights, and perhaps sometimes encroached a little upon the office of the minister. A clergyman had been remarking to one of his elders that he was unfortunately invited to two funerals on one day, and that they were fixed for the same hour. "Weel sir," answered the elder, "if ye'll tak the tane I'll tak the tither."

Some of the elders were great humorists and originals in their way. An elder of the kirk at Muthill used to manifest his humour and originality by his mode of

collecting the alms. As he went round with the ladle, he reminded such members of the congregation as seemed backward in their duty, by giving them a poke with the "brod," and making, in an audible whisper, such remarks as these—"Wife at the braid mailin, mind the puir;" "Lass wi' the braw plaid, mind the puir," etc., a mode of collecting which marks rather a by-gone state of things. But on no question was the old Scottish disciplinarian, whether elder or not, more sure to raise his testimony than on anything connected with a desecration of the Sabbath. In this spirit was the rebuke given to an eminent geologist, when visiting in the Highlands; the professor was walking on the hills one Sunday morning, and partly from the effect of habit, and partly from not adverting to the very strict notions on Sabbath desecration entertained in Ross-shire, had his pocket hammer in hand, and was thoughtlessly breaking the specimens of minerals he picked up by the way. Under these circumstances, he was met by an old man steadily pursuing his way to his church, for some time the patriarch observing the movements of the geologist, and at length, going up to him, quietly said, "Sir, ye're breaking something there forbye the stanes!"

The same feeling under a more fastidious form was exhibited to a traveller by a Scottish peasant:—An English artist travelling professionally through Scotland had occasion to remain over Sunday in a small town in the north. To while away the time, he walked out a short way in the environs, where the picturesque ruin of a castle met his eye. He asked a countryman who was passing to be so good as tell him the name of the castle. The reply was somewhat startling—"It's no the day to be speering sic things!"

A manifestation of even still greater strictness, on the subject of Sabbath desecration, I have received from a relative of the family in which it occurred. About

fifty years ago the Hon. Mrs. Stewart lived in Heriot Row, who had a cook, Jeannie by name, a paragon of excellence. One Sunday morning when her daughter (afterwards Lady Elton) went into the kitchen, she was surprised to find a new jack (recently ordered, and which was constructed on the principle of going constantly without winding up), wholly paralyzed and useless. Miss Stewart naturally inquired what accident had happened to the new jack, as it had stopped. The mystery was soon solved by Jeannie indignantly exclaiming that " she was nae gaeing to hae the fule thing clocking and rinning about in *her* kitchen a' the blessed Sabbath day."

There sometimes appears to have been in our countrymen an undue preponderance of zeal for Sabbath observance as compared with the importance attached to *other* religious duties, and especially as compared with the virtue of sobriety. The following dialogue between Mr. M—— of Glasgow, the celebrated artist, and an old highland acquaintance whom he had met with unexpectedly will illustrate the contrast between the severity of judgment passed upon treating the Sabbath with levity and the lighter censure attached to indulgence in whisky. Mr. M—— begins :—" Donald, what brought you here ? " " Ou weel, sir, it was a baad place yon ; they were baad folk—but they're a God-fearin' set o' folk here ! " " Well, Donald," said Mr. M., " I'm glad to hear it." " Ou ay, sir, 'deed are they ; an I'll gie ye an instance o't. Last Sabbath, just as the kirk was skailin', there was a drover chield frae Dumfries comin' along the road whustlin', an' lookin' as *happy* as if it was ta muddle o' the week ; weel, sir, oor laads is a God-fearin' set o' laads, an they were just comin' oot o' the kirk—od they yokit upon him, an' a'most killed him ! " Mr. M., to whom their zeal seemed scarcely sufficiently well directed to merit his approbation, then asked Donald whether it had

been drunkenness that induced the depravity of his former neighbours? "Weel, weel, sir," said Donald, with some hesitation, "*may*-bee; I'll no say but it micht." "Depend upon it," said Mr. M., "it's a bad thing whisky." "Weel, weel, sir," replied Donald, "I'll no say but it *may*;" adding in a very decided tone—"speeciallie *baad* whusky!"

I do not know any anecdote which illustrates in a more striking and natural manner the strong feeling which exists in the Scottish mind on this subject. At a certain time, the hares in the neighbourhood of a Scottish burgh had, from the inclemency of the season or from some other cause, become emboldened more than usual to approach the dwelling-places of men; so much so that on one Sunday morning a hare was seen skipping along the street as the people were going to church. An old man spying puss in this unusual position, significantly remarked, "Ay, yon beast kens weel it is the Sabbath-day;" taking it for granted that no one in the place would be found audacious enough to hurt the animal on a Sunday.

Lady Macneil supplies an excellent pendant to Miss Stuart's story about the clock going on the Sunday. Her henwife had got some Dorking fowls, and on Lady M. asking if they were laying many eggs, she replied, with great earnestness, "Indeed, my leddy, they lay every day, no' excepting the blessed Sabbath."

There were, however, old persons at that time who were not quite so orthodox on the point of Sabbath observance, and of these a lady residing in Dumfries was known often to employ her wet Sundays in arranging her wardrobe. "Preserve us!" she said on one occasion, "anither gude Sunday! I dinna ken whan I'll get thae drawers red up."

In connection with the awful subject of death and all its concomitants, it has been often remarked, that the

older generation of Scottish people used to view the circumstances belonging to the decease of their nearest and dearest friends, with a coolness which does not at first sight seem consistent with their deep and sincere religious impressions. Amongst the peasantry, this was sometimes manifested in an extraordinary and startling manner. I do not believe that those persons had less affection for their friends than a corresponding class in England, but they had less awe of the concomitants of death, and approached them with more familiarity. For example, I remember long ago at Fasque, my sister-in-law visiting a worthy and attached old couple, of whom the husband, Charles Duncan, who had been gardener at Fasque for above thirty years, was evidently dying. He was sitting on a common deal chair, and on my sister proposing to send down for his use an old arm-chair, which she recollected was laid up in a garret—his wife exclaimed against such a needless trouble. "Hout, my lady, what would he be duin' wi' an arm-chair; he's just deein' fast awa?" I have two anecdotes, illustrative of the same state of feeling, from a lady of ancient Scottish family, accustomed to visit her poor dependants on the property, and to notice their ways. She was calling at a decent cottage, and found the occupant busy carefully ironing out some linens—the lady remarked, "Those are fine linens you have got there, Janet." "Troth mem," was the reply, "they're just the gude-man's *deed* claes, and there are nane better i' the parish." On another occasion, when visiting an excellent woman, to condole with her on the death of her nephew, with whom she had lived, and whose loss must have been severely felt by her, she remarked, "What a nice white cap you have got, Margaret." "Indeed mem, ay, sae it is; for ye see the gude lad's winding sheet was ower lang, and I cut aff as muckle as made twa bonny mutches" (caps).

There certainly was a quaint and familiar manner

in which sacred and solemn subjects were referred to by the older Scottish race, who did not mean to be irreverent, but who no doubt appeared so to a more refined but not really a more religious generation.

It seems to me that this plainness of speech arose in part from the *sincerity* of their belief in all the circumstances of another condition of being. They spoke of things hereafter as positive certainties, and viewed things invisible through the same medium as they viewed things present. The following is illustrative of such a state of mind, and I am assured of its perfect authenticity and literal correctness :—" Joe M'Pherson and his wife lived in Inverness. They had two sons, who helped their father in his trade of a smith. They were industrious and careful, but not successful. The old man had bought a house, leaving a large part of the price unpaid. It was the ambition of his life to pay off that debt, but it was too much for him, and he died in the struggle. His sons kept on the business with the old industry, and with better fortune. At last their old mother fell sick, and told her sons she was dying, as in truth she was. The elder son said to her, " mother, you'll soon be with my father ; no doubt you'll have much to tell him ; but dinna forget this, mother, mind ye, tell him *the house is freed.* He'll be glad to hear that."

A similar feeling is manifest in the following conversation, which, I am assured, is authentic :—At Hawick, the people used to wear wooden clogs, which make a *clanking* noise on the pavement. A dying old woman had some friends by her bedside, who said to her, " Weel, Jenny, ye are gaun to Heeven, an' gin you should see our folk, ye can tell them that we're a' weel." To which Jenny replied, " Weel, gin I shud see them I'se tell them, but you manna expect that I am to gang clank clanking through Heeven looking for your folk."

But of all stories of this class, I think the following

death-bed conversation between a Scottish husband and wife, is about the richest specimen of a dry Scottish matter-of-fact view of a very serious question :—An old shoemaker in Glasgow was sitting by the bedside of his wife, who was dying. She took him by the hand. "Weel, John, we're gawin to part. I hae been a gude wife to you, John." "Oh just middling, just middling, Jenny," said John, not disposed to commit himself. "John," says she, "ye maun promise to bury me in the auld kirk-yard at Stra'von, beside my mither. I couldna rest in peace among unco folk, in the dirt and smoke o' Glasgow." "Weel, weel, Jenny, my woman," said John smoothingly, "we'll just pit you in the Gorbals *first*, and gin ye dinna lie quiet, we'll try you sine in Stra'von."

The same unimaginative and matter-of-fact view of things connected with the other world extended to a very youthful age, as in the case of a little boy who, when told of Heaven, put the question, "an' will Faather be there?" His instructress answered, "of course, she hoped he would be there;" to which he sturdily at once replied, "then I'll no gang."

We might apply these remarks in some measure to the Scottish pulpit ministrations of an older school, in which a minuteness of detail and a quaintness of expression were quite common, but which could not now be tolerated. I have two specimens of such antiquated language, supplied by correspondents, and I am assured they are both genuine.

The first is given on the authority of a St. Andrews Professor, who is stated to be a great authority in such narratives.

In one of our northern counties, a rural district had its harvest operations seriously affected by continuous rains. The crops being much laid, wind was desired in order to restore them to a condition fit for the sickle. A minister, in his Sabbath services, expressed their

wants in prayer as follows :—" O Lord, we pray thee to send us wind, no a rantin', tantin', tearin' wind, but a noohin' (noughin ?) soughin' winnin' wind." More expressive words than these could not be found in any language.

The other story relates to a portion of the Presbyterian service on sacramental occasions, called " fencing the tables," *i.e.*, prohibiting the approach of those who were unworthy to receive.

This fencing of the tables was performed in the following effective manner by an old divine, whose flock transgressed the third commandment, not in a gross and loose manner, but in its minor details : " I debar all those who use such minced oaths as faith ! troth ! losh ! gosh ! and lovanendie ! "

A circumstance connected with Scottish church discipline has undergone a great change in my time. I mean the public censure from the pulpit, in the time of divine service, of offenders, previously convicted before the minister and his kirk session. This was performed by the guilty person standing up before the congregation on a raised platform, called the *cutty stool*, and receiving a rebuke. I never saw it done, but have heard in my part of the country of the discipline being enforced occasionally. Indeed, I recollect an instance where the rebuke was thus administered, and received under circumstances of a touching character, and which made it partake of the moral sublime. The daughter of the minister had herself committed an offence against moral purity, such as usually called forth this church censure. The minister peremptorily refused to make her an exception to his ordinary practice. His child stood up in the congregation, and received, from her agonized father, a rebuke similar to that administered to other members of his congregation for a like offence. The spirit of the age became unfavourable to the practice. The rebuke on the cutty stool, like

the penance in a white sheet in England, went out of use, and the circumstance is now a matter of "reminiscence." I have received some communications on the subject, which bear upon this point; and I subjoin the following remarks from a kind correspondent, a clergyman, to whom I am largely indebted, as indicating the great change which has taken place in this matter.

"Church discipline," he writes, "was much more vigorously enforced in olden time than it is now. A certain couple having been guilty of illicit intercourse, and also within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, appeared before the Presbytery of Lanark, and made confession in sackcloth. They were ordered to return to their own session, and to stand at the kirk-door, barefoot and barelegged, from the second bell to the last, and thereafter in the public place of repentance; and, at direction of the session, thereafter to go through the whole kirks of the presbytery, and to satisfy them in like manner. If such penance were now enforced for like offences, we believe the registration books of many parishes in Scotland would become more creditable in certain particulars than they unfortunately are at the present time."

But there was a less formidable ecclesiastical censure occasionally given by the minister from the pulpit against lesser misdemeanours, which took place under his own eye, such as levity of conduct or *sleeping* in church. A most amusing specimen of such censure was once inflicted by the minister upon his own wife for an offence not in our day visited with so heavy a penalty. The clergyman had observed one of his flock asleep during his sermon. He paused, and called him to order. "Jeems Robson, ye are sleepin', I insist on your wauking when God's word is preached to ye." "Well, sir, you may look at your ain seat, and ye'll see a sleeper forbye me," answered Jeems, pointing to the clergyman's lady in the minister's

pew. "Then, Jeems," said the minister, "when ye see my wife asleep again, haud up your hand." By and by the arm was stretched out, and sure enough the fair lady was caught in the act. Her husband solemnly called her to stand up and receive the censure due to her offence. He thus addressed her:—"Mrs. B., a'body kens that when I got ye for my wife, I got nae beauty. Yer frien's ken that I got nae siller; and if I dinna get God's grace, I shall hae a puir bargain indeed."

The quaint and original humour of the old Scottish minister came out occasionally in the more private services of his vocation as well as in church. As the whole service, whether for baptisms or marriages, is supplied by the clergyman officiating, there is more scope for scenes between the parties present than at similar ministrations by a prescribed form. Thus, a late minister of Caithness, when examining a member of his flock, who was a butcher, in reference to the baptism of his child, found him so deficient in what he considered the needful theological knowledge, that he said to him, "Ah, Sandy, I doubt ye're no fit to had up the bairn." Sandy, conceiving that reference was made not to spiritual but to physical incapacity, answered indignantly, "Hout, minister, I could haud him up an he were a twa-year-auld stirk."[1] A late humorous old minister, near Peebles, who had strong feelings on the subject of matrimonial happiness, thus prefaced the ceremony by an address to the parties who came to him. "My friends, marriage is a blessing to a few, a curse to many, and a great uncertainty to all. Do ye venture?" After a pause, he repeated with great emphasis, "Do ye venture?" No objection being made to the venture, he then said, "Let's proceed."

The old Scottish hearers were very particular on the subject of their minister's preaching old sermons; and to repeat a discourse which they could recollect was

[1] Bullock.

always made a subject of animadversion by those who heard it. A beadle who was a good deal of a wit in his way, gave a sly hit in his pretended defence of his minister on the question. As they were proceeding from church, the minister observed the beadle had been laughing as if he had triumphed over some of the parishioners with whom he had been in conversation. On asking the cause of this, he received for answer, "Dod, sir, they were saying ye had preached an auld sermon to-day, but I tackled them, for I tauld them it was no an auld sermon, for the minister had preached it no sax months syne."

I remember the minister of Banchory, Mr. Gregory, availed himself of the feelings of his people on this subject for the purpose of accomplishing a particular object. During the building of the new church, the service had to be performed in a schoolroom, which did not nearly hold the whole congregation. The object was to get part of the parish to attend in morning, and part in afternoon. Mr. Gregory prevented those who had attended in the morning from returning in the afternoon by just giving them, as he said, "cauld kail het again."

It is somewhat remarkable, however, that notwithstanding this feeling in the matter of a repetition of old sermons, there was amongst a large class of Scottish preachers of a former day such a sameness of subject as really sometimes made it difficult to distinguish the discourse of one Sunday from amongst others. These were entirely doctrinal, and however they might commence after the opening or introduction, hearers were certain to find the preacher falling gradually into the old channel. The fall of man in Adam, his restoration in Christ, justification by faith, and the terms of the new covenant, formed the staple of each sermon, and without which it was not in fact reckoned complete as an orthodox exposition of Christian doctrine. Without omitting the essentials of Christian instruction, preachers now take

a wider view of illustrating and explaining the gospel scheme of salvation and regeneration, without constant recurrence to the elemental and fundamental principles of the faith. From my friend Dr. Cook of Haddington (who it is well known has a copious stock of old Scotch traditionary anecdotes), I have an admirable illustration of this state of things as regards pulpit instruction.

"Much of the preaching of the Scotch clergy," Dr. Cook observes, "in the last century was almost exclusively doctrinal. The fall—the nature, the extent, and the application of the remedy. In the hands of able men, no doubt, there might be much variety of exposition, but with weaker or indolent men, preaching extempore or without notes, it too often ended in a weekly repetition of what had been already said. An old elder of mine, whose recollection might reach back from sixty to seventy years, said to me one day, 'Now-a-days, people make a work if a minister preach the same sermon over again in the course of two or three years. When I was a boy, we would have wondered if old Mr. W—— had preached anything else than what we had heard the Sunday before.' My old friend used to tell of a clergyman who had held forth on the broken covenant till his people longed for a change. The elders waited on him to intimate their wish, They were examined on their knowledge of the subject. found deficient, rebuked, and dismissed, but after a little while they returned to the charge, and the minister gave in. Next Lord's day he read a large portion of the history of Joseph and his brethren, as the subject of a lecture. He paraphrased it greatly, no doubt to the detriment of the original, but much to the satisfaction of his people, for it was something new. He finished the paraphrase, 'and now,' says he, 'my friends, we shall proceed to draw some lessons and inferences; and 1st, you will observe that the sacks of Joseph's brethren were *ripit*, and in them was found the cup; so your sacks will

be *ripit* at the day of judgment, and the first thing found in them will be the broken covenant,' and having gained this advantage, the sermon went off into the usual strain, and embodied the usual heads of elementary dogmatic theology."

In connection with this topic, I have a communication from a correspondent, who remarks, the story about the minister and his favourite theme, "The Broken Covenant," reminds me of one respecting another minister whose staple topics of discourse were "Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification." Into every sermon he preached, he managed, by hook or by crook, to force these three heads, so that his general method of handling every text was not so much *expositio*, as *impositio*. He was preaching on these words—"Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child?" and he soon brought the question into the usual formula by adding Ephraim was a pleasant child; first, because he was a justified child; second, because he was an adopted child; and, third, because he was a sanctified child.

It should be remembered, however, that the Scottish peasantry themselves, I mean those of the older school, delighted in expositions of *doctrinal* subjects, and in fact were extremely jealous of any minister who departed from their high standard of orthodox divinity, by selecting subjects which involved discussions of strictly moral or *practical* questions. It was condemned under the epithet of *legal* preaching; in other words, it was supposed to preach the law as independent of the gospel. A worthy old clergyman having, upon the occasion of a communion Monday, taken a text of such a character, was thus commented on by an ancient dame of the congregation, who was previously acquainted with his style of discourse; —"If there's an ill text in a' the Bible, that creetur's aye sure to tak it."

The great change—the great improvement, I would

say—which has taken place during the last half century in the feelings and practical relations of religion with social life is, that it has become more diffused through all ranks and all characters. Before that period many good sort of people were afraid of making their religious views very prominent, and were always separated from those who did. Persons who made a profession at all beyond the low standard generally adopted in society were marked out as objects of fear or of distrust. The anecdote at page 31 regarding the practice of family prayer fully proves this. Now, religious people and religion itself are not kept aloof from the ordinary current of men's thoughts and actions. There is no such marked line as used to be drawn round persons who make a decided profession of religion. Christian men and women have stepped over the line, and, without compromising their Christian principle, are not necessarily either morose, uncharitable, or exclusive. The effects of the old separation were injurious to men's minds. Religion was with many associated with puritanism, with cant, and unfitness for the world. The difference is marked also in the style of sermons prevalent at the two periods. There were sermons of two descriptions—viz., sermons by "*moderate*" clergy, of a purely moral or practical character, and sermons purely doctrinal, from those who were known as "evangelical" ministers. Hence arose an impression, and not unnaturally, on many minds, that an almost exclusive reference to doctrinal subjects, and a dread of upholding the law, and of enforcing its more minute details, were not favourable to the cause of moral rectitude and practical holiness of life. This was hinted in a sly way by a young member of the kirk to his father, a minister of the severe and high Calvinistic school. Old Dr. Lockhart of Glasgow was lamenting one day, in the presence of his son John, the fate of a man who had been found guilty of immoral practices, and the more so that he

was one of his own elders. "Well, father," remarked his son, "you see what you've driven him to."

The same feeling came forth with much point and humour on an occasion referred to in *Carlyle's Memoirs*. In a company where John Home and David Hume were present, much wonder was expressed what *could* have induced a clerk belonging to Sir William Forbes' bank to abscond, and embezzle £900. "I know what it was," said Home to the historian, "for when he was taken there was found in his pocket a volume of your philosophical works and Boston's *Fourfold State*"—a hit, 1st, at the infidel, whose principles would have undermined Christianity; and 2nd, a hit at the Church, which had expelled him for writing the tragedy of *Douglas*.

I can myself recollect an obsolete ecclesiastical custom, and which was always practised in the church of Fettercairn during my boyish days, viz., that of the minister bowing to the heritors in succession who occupied the front gallery seats, and I am assured that this bowing from the pulpit to the principal heritor or heritors after the blessing had been pronounced was very common in rural parishes till about forty years ago, and perhaps till a still later period. And when heritors chanced to be pretty equally matched, there was sometimes an unpleasant contest as to who was entitled to the precedence in having the *first* bow. A case of this kind once occurred in the parish of Lanark, which was carried so far as to be laid before the Presbytery, but they not considering themselves "competent judges of the points of honour and precedency among gentlemen, and, to prevent all inconveniency in these matters in the future, appointed the minister to forbear bowing to the lairds at all from the pulpit for the time to come;" and they also appointed four of their number "to wait upon the gentlemen to deal with them, for bringing them to condescend to submit

hereunto, for the success of the gospel, and the peace of the parish."

In connection with this subject, we may mention a ready and complimentary reply once made by the late Reverend Dr. Wightman of Kirkmahoe, on being rallied for his neglecting this usual act of courtesy one Sabbath in his own church. The heritor who was entitled to, and always received this token of respect, was P. Miller, Esquire, proprietor of Dalswinton. One Sabbath the Dalswinton pew contained a bevy of ladies, but no gentlemen, and the Doctor—perhaps because he was a bachelor and felt a delicacy in the circumstances—omitted the usual salaam in their direction. A few days after, meeting Miss Miller, who was widely famed for her great beauty, and who afterwards became Countess of Mar, she rallied him, in presence of her companions, for not bowing to her from the pulpit on the previous Sunday, and requested an explanation, when the good Doctor immediately replied,—" I beg your pardon, Miss Miller, but you surely know that angel worship is not allowed in the Church of Scotland ; " and lifting his hat, he made a low bow, and passed on.

Scottish congregations, in some parts of the country, contain an element in their composition quite unknown in English churches. In pastoral parts of the country, it was an established practice for each shepherd to bring his faithful *collie* dog—at least it was so some years ago. In a district of Sutherland, where the population is very scanty, the congregations are made up one-half of dogs, each human member having his canine companion. These dogs sit out the Gaelic services and sermon with commendable patience, till towards the end of the last psalm, when there is a universal stretching and yawning, and are all prepared to scamper out, barking in a most excited manner whenever the blessing is commenced. The congregation of one of these churches determined

that the service should close in a more decorous manner, and steps were taken to attain this object. Accordingly, when a stranger clergyman was officiating, he found the people all sitting when he was about to pronounce the blessing. He hesitated, and paused, expecting them to rise, till an old shepherd looking up to the pulpit, said, "Say awa', sir, we're a' sitting to cheat the dowgs."

I remember in the parish church of Fettercairn, though it must be sixty years ago, a custom—still lingering, I believe, in some parts of the country—of the precentor reading each single line before it was sung by the congregation. This practice gave rise to a somewhat unlucky introduction of a line from the first psalm. In most churches in Scotland the communion tables are placed in the centre of the church. After sermon and prayer, the seats round these tables are occupied by the communicants while a psalm is being sung. One communion Sabbath, the precentor observed the noble family of Eglantine approaching the tables, and likely to be kept out by those pressing in before them. Being very zealous for their accommodation, he called out to an individual whom he considered to be the principal obstacle in clearing the passage, "Come back, Jock, and let in the noble family of Eglantine," and then turning to his psalm-book, took up his duty, and went on to read the line, "Nor stand in sinners' way."

On this point of changes in religious feelings there comes within the scope of these Reminiscences a character in Aberdeenshire, which has now gone out—I mean the popular and universally well-received Roman Catholic priest. Although we cannot say that Scotland is a more Protestant nation than it was in past days, still religious differences, and strong prejudices, seem at the present time to draw a more decided line of separation between the priest and his Protestant countrymen. As examples of what is past, I would refer to the case of a genial and

Romish bishop in Ross-shire. It is well known that private stills were prevalent in the Highlands fifty or sixty years ago, and no one thought there was any harm in them. This good bishop, whose name I forget, was (as I heard the late W. Mackenzie of Muirton assure a party at Dunrobin Castle) several years previously a famous hand at brewing a good glass of whiskey, and that he distributed his mountain dew with a liberal and impartial hand alike to Catholic and to Protestant friends. Of this class, I recollect, certainly forty-five years ago, Priest Gordon, a genuine Aberdonian, and a man beloved by all, rich and poor. He was a sort of chaplain to Menzies of Pitfodels, and visited in all the country families round Aberdeen. I remember once his being at Banchory Lodge, and thus apologising to my aunt for going out of the room :—" I beg your pardon, Mrs. Forbes, for leaving you, but I maun just gae doun to the garden and say mi bit wordies," these " bit wordies " being in fact the portion of the Breviary which he was bound to recite—so easily and pleasantly were those matters then referred to.

The following, however, is a still richer illustration, and I am assured it is genuine :—" Towards the end of the last century, a worthy Roman Catholic clergyman, well known as ' Priest Matheson,' and universally respected in the district, had charge of a mission in Aberdeenshire, and for a long time made his journeys on a piebald pony, the priest and his ' Pyet Shelty ' sharing an affectionate recognition wherever they came. On one occasion, however, he made his appearance on a steed of a different description, and passing near a Seceding meeting-house, he forgathered with the minister, who, after the usual kindly greetings, missing the familiar pony said, ' Ou Priest ! fat's come o' the auld Pyet ? ' ' He's deid, minister.' ' Weel, he was an auld faithfu' servant, and ye wad nae doot gie him the offices o' the Church ? ' ' Na, minister,' said his friend, not quite liking this

allusion to his priestly offices, 'I didna dee that, for ye see he *turned Seceder afore he deed, an' I buried him like a beast.*' He then rode quietly away. This worthy man, however, could, when occasion required, rebuke with a seriousness as well as point. Always a welcome guest at the houses of both clergy and gentry, he is said on one occasion to have met with a laird, whose hospitality he had thought it proper to decline, and on being asked the reason for the interruption of his visits, answered, 'Ye ken, an' I ken, but, laird! God kens.'"

One question connected with religious feeling, and the manifestation of religious feeling, has become a more settled point amongst us, since fifty years have expired. I mean the question of attendance by clergymen on theatrical representations. Dr. Carlyle had been prosecuted before the General Assembly in 1757 for being present at the performance of the *Tragedy of Douglas*, written by his friend John Home. He was acquitted, however, and writes thus on the subject in his memoirs :—

"Although the clergy in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood had abstained from the theatre, because it gave offence, yet the more remote clergymen, when occasionally in town, had almost universally attended the playhouse. It is remarkable that in the year 1784, when the great actress Mrs. Siddons first appeared in Edinburgh, during the sitting of the General Assembly, that Court was obliged to fix all its important business for the alternate days when she did not act, as all the younger members, clergy as well as laity, took their stations in the theatre on those days by three in the afternoon."

Drs. Robertson and Blair, although they cultivated the acquaintance of Mrs. Siddons in private, were amongst those clergymen referred to by Dr. Carlyle, who abstained from attendance in the theatre; but Dr. Carlyle states, that they regretted not taking the opportunity of witnessing

a display of her talent, and of giving their sanction to the theatre as a place of recreation. Dr. Carlyle evidently considered it a narrow-minded intolerance and bigoted fanaticism, that clergymen should be excluded from that amusement. At a period far later than 1784, the same opinion prevailed in some quarters. I recollect when such indulgence on the part of clergymen was treated with much leniency, especially for Episcopalian clergy. I do not mean to say that there was anything like a general feeling in favour of clerical theatrical attendance, but there can be no question of a feeling far less strict than what exists in our own time. As I have said, thirty-six years ago some clergymen went to the theatre, and a few years before that, when my brothers and I were passing through Edinburgh, in going backward and forward to school, at Durham, with our tutor, a licentiate of the Established Church of Scotland, and who afterwards attained considerable eminence in the Free Church, we certainly went with him to the theatre there, and at Durham, very frequently. I feel quite assured, however, that no clergyman could expect to retain the respect of his people or of the public, of whom it was known that he frequently or habitually attended theatrical representations. It is so understood. I had opportunities of conversing with the late Mr. Murray of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and with Mr. Charles Kean on the subject. Both admitted the fact, and certainly if any men of the profession *could* have removed the feeling from the public mind, these were the men to have done it.

There is a phase of religious observances which has undergone a great change amongst us within fifty years. I mean the services and circumstances connected with the administration of the Holy Communion. When these occurred in a parish they were called "occasions," and the great interest excited by these sacramental solemnities

may be gathered from *Peter's Letters*, *The Annals of the Parish*, and Burns' poem. Such ceremonials are now conducted, I believe, just as the ordinary Church services. Some years back they were considered a sort of preaching matches. Ministers vied with each other in order to bear away the bell in popularity, and hearers embraced the opportunity in exhibiting to one another their powers of criticism on what they heard and saw. In the parish of Urr, Dumfries-shire, on one sacramental occasion, some of the assistants invited were eminent ministers in Edinburgh. Dr. Scot, of St. Michael's, Dumfries, was the only local one who was asked, and he was, in his own sphere, very popular as a preacher. A brother clergyman complimenting him upon the honour of being so invited, the old bald-headed divine modestly replied, "Gude bless you man, what can I do? They're a' han' wailed [1] this time; I need never shew face among them." "Ye're quite mista'en," was the soothing encouragement, "tak' your *Resurrection* (a well-known service used for such occasions by him), an' I'll lay my lug ye'll beat every clute o' them." The Doctor did as suggested, and exerted himself to the utmost, and it appears he did not exert himself in vain. A batch of old women, on their way home after the conclusion of the services, were overheard discussing the merits of the several preachers who had that day addressed them from the tent. "Leeze me abune them a'," said one of the company who had waxed warm in the discussion, "for yon auld clear-headed (bald) man, that said, 'Raphael sings an' Gabriel strikes his goolden harp, an' a' the angels clap their wings wi' joy.' O but it was gran', it just put me in min' o' our geese at Dunjarg when they turn their nebs to the south an' clap their wings when they see the rain's comin' after lang drooth."

There is a subject closely allied with the religious

[1] Carefully selected.

feelings of a people, and that is the subject of their *superstitions*. To enter upon that question, in a general view, especially in reference to the Highlands, would not be consistent with our present purpose, but I am induced to mention the existence of a singular superstition regarding swine which existed some years ago among the lower orders of the east coast of Fife. I can observe, in my own experience, a great change to have taken place amongst Scotch people generally on this subject. The old aversion to the "unclean animal" still lingers in the Highlands, but seems in the lowland districts to have yielded to a sense of its thrift and usefulness.[1] The account given by my correspondent of the Fife swinaphobia is as follows :—

Among the many superstitious notions and customs prevalent among the lower orders of the fishing towns on the east coast of Fife, till very recently, that class entertained a great horror of swine, and even at the very mention of the word. If that animal crossed their path when about to set out on a sea voyage, they considered it so unlucky an omen that they would not venture off. A clergyman of one of these fishing villages having mentioned this superstition to a clerical friend, and finding that he was rather incredulous on the subject, in order to convince him told him he would allow him an opportunity of testing the truth of it by allowing him to preach for him the following day. It was arranged that his friend was to read the chapter relating to the herd of swine into which the evil spirits were cast. Accordingly, when the first verse was read in which the unclean beast was mentioned, a slight commotion was observable among the audience, each one of them putting his or her hand on any near piece of iron—a nail on the seat or bookboard,

[1] I recollect an old Scottish gentleman, who shared this horror, asking very gravely, "Were not swine forbidden under the law, and cursed under the Gospel ?"

or to the nails on their shoes. At the repetition of the word again and again, more commotion was visible, and the words "cauld airn" (cold iron), the antidote to this baneful spell, were heard issuing from various corners of the church. And finally, on his coming over the hated word again, when the whole herd ran violently down the bank into the sea, the alarmed parishioners, irritated beyond bounds, rose and all left the church in bodies.

Amongst a people so deeply impressed with the great truths of religion, and so earnest in their religious profession, any persons whose principles were known to be of an *infidel* character would naturally be looked on with abhorrence and suspicion. There is a story traditionary in Edinburgh regarding David Hume, which illustrates this feeling in a very amusing manner, and which I have heard it said, Hume himself often narrated. The philosopher had fallen from the path into the swamp at the back of the Castle, the existence of which I recollect hearing of from old persons forty years ago. He fairly stuck fast, and called to a woman who was passing, and begged her assistance. She passed on apparently without attending to the request; at his earnest entreaty, however, she came where he was, and asked him, "Are na ye Hume the Atheist?" "Well, well, no matter," said Hume; "Christian charity commands you to do good to every one." "Christian charity here, or Christian there," replied the woman, "I'll do naething for you till ye turn a Christian yoursell—ye maun repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, or faith I'll let ye grafel[1] there as I fand ye." The sceptic, really afraid for his life, rehearsed the required formulas.

Notwithstanding the high character borne for so many years by our countrymen as a people, and as specially attentive to all religious observances, still there can be no doubt that there has sprung up amongst the

[1] Lie in a grovelling attitude. See *Jamieson.*

inhabitants of our crowded cities, wynds, and closes, a class of persons quite unknown in the old Scottish times. It is a great difficulty to get them to attend Divine worship at all, and their circumstances combine to break off all associations with public services. Their going to church becomes a matter of persuasion and of missionary labour.

A lady, who is most active in visiting the houses of those outcasts from the means of grace, gives me an amusing instance of self-complacency arising from performance of the duty. She was visiting in the West Port, not far from the church established by my illustrious friend the late Dr. Chalmers. Having asked a poor woman if she ever attended there for Divine service—"Ou ay," she replied; "there's a man ca'd Chalmers preaches there, and I whiles gang in and hear him, just to encourage him, puir body!"

From the religious opinions of a people, the transition is natural to their political partialities. One great political change has passed over Scotland, which none now living can hardly be said to have actually *witnessed*; but they remember those who were contemporaries of the anxious scenes of '45, and many of us have known determined and thorough Jacobites. The poetry of that political period still remains, but we hear only as pleasant songs those words and melodies which stirred the hearts and excited the deep enthusiasm of a past generation. Jacobite anecdotes also are fading from our knowledge. To many young persons they are unknown. Of these stories illustrative of Jacobite feelings and enthusiasm, many are of a character not fit for me to record. The good old ladies who were violent partisans of the Stuarts had little hesitation in referring without reserve to the future and eternal destiny of William of Orange. One anecdote which I had from a near relative of the family may be adduced in illustration of the powerful hold which

the cause had upon the views and consciences of Jacobites.

A former Mr. Stirling of Keir had favoured the Stuart cause, and had in fact attended a muster of forces at the Brig of Turk previous to the '15. This symptom of a rising against the Government occasioned some uneasiness, and the authorities were very active in their endeavours to discover who were the leaders of the movement. Keir was suspected. The miller of Keir was brought forward as a witness, and swore positively that the Laird was *not* present. Now, as it was well known that he was there, and that the miller knew it, a neighbour asked him privately when he came out of the witness-box, how he could on oath assert such a falsehood. The miller replied, quite undaunted, and with a feeling of confidence in the righteousness of his cause approaching the sublime —" I would rather trust my soul in God's mercy than trust Keir's head into their hands."

A correspondent has sent me an account of a curious ebullition of Jacobite feeling and enthusiasm, now I suppose quite extinct. My correspondent received it himself from Alexander, fourth Duke of Gordon, and he had entered it in a commonplace book when he heard it, in 1826.

" David Tulloch, tenant in Drumbenan, under the second and third Dukes of Gordon, had been " *out* " in the '45—or the *fufteen or both*—and was a great favourite of his respective landlords. One day David having attended the young Lady Susan Gordon (afterwards Duchess of Manchester) to the " Chapel " at Huntly. David perceiving that her ladyship had neither hassock or carpet to protect her garments from the earthen floor, respectfully spread his plaid for the young lady to kneel upon, and the service proceeded ; but when the prayer for the King and Royal Family was commenced, David, *sans cérémonie*, drew, or rather " twitched," the

plaid from under the knees of the astonished young lady, exclaiming *not* sotto voce, "The deil a ane shall pray for *them* on *my* plaid!"

The following is a characteristic Jacobite story. It must have happened shortly after 1745, when all manner of devices were fallen upon to display Jacobitism, without committing the safety of the Jacobite, such as having white knots on gowns, drinking "The king, ye ken wha I mean,"—uttering the toast "the king" with much apparent loyalty, and passing the glass on the side of the water-jug from them, indicating the esoteric meaning of majesty *beyond* the sea,—etc., etc.; and various toasts, which were most important matters in those times, and were often given as tests of loyalty, or the reverse, according to the company in which they were given. Miss Carnegy of Craigo, well known and still remembered amongst the old Montrose ladies as an uncompromising Jacobite, had been vowing that she would drink King James and his son in a company of staunch Brunswickers, and being strongly dissuaded from any such foolish and dangerous attempt by some of her friends present, she answered them with a text of Scripture, "The tongue no man can tame—James *Third* and *Aucht*," and drank off her glass![1]

[1] Implying that there was a James Third of England, Eighth of Scotland.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

ON OLD SCOTTISH CONVIVIALITY

The next change in manners which has been effected in the memory of many now living, regards the habits of conviviality, or, to speak more plainly, regards the banishment of *drunkenness* from polite society. It is indeed a most important and blessed change. But it is a change the full extent of which many persons now alive can hardly estimate. Indeed it is scarcely possible to realise the scenes which took place seventy or eighty years back, or even less. In many houses, when a party dined, the ladies going away was the signal for the commencement of a system of compulsory conviviality. No one was allowed to shirk—no daylight—no heeltaps—was the wretched jargon in which were expressed the propriety and the duty of seeing that the glass, when filled, must be emptied and drained. We have heard of glasses having the bottoms knocked off, so that no shuffling tricks might be played with them, and that they could only be put down—empty.

One cannot help looking back with amazement at the infatuation which could for a moment tolerate such a sore evil. To a man of sober inclinations, it must have been an intolerable nuisance to join a dinner party at many houses, where he knew he should have to witness the most disgusting excesses in others, and to fight hard to preserve himself from a compliance with the example of those around him.

The scenes of excess which occurred in the houses where deep drinking was practised must have been most

revolting to sober persons who were unaccustomed to such conviviality; as in the case of a drinking Angus laird, entertaining as his guest a London merchant of formal manners and temperate habits. The poor man was driven from the table when the drinking set in hard, and stole away to take refuge in his bedroom. The company, however, were determined not to let the worthy citizen off so easily, but proceeded in a body, with the laird at their head, and invaded his privacy by exhibiting bottles and glasses at his bed-side. Losing all patience, the wretched victim gasped out his indignation—"Sir, your hospitality borders upon brutality." It must have had a fatal influence also on many persons to whom drinking was most injurious, and who were yet not strong-minded enough to resist the temptations to excess. Poor James Boswell, who certainly required no *extraordinary* urging to take a glass too much, is found in his letters which have recently come to light, laying the blame of his excesses to "falling into a habit which still prevails in Scotland;" and then he remarks, with censorious emphasis, on the "drunken manners of his countrymen." This was about 1770.

A friend of mine, however, lately departed, Mr. Boswell of Balmuto, showed more spirit than the Londoner, when he found himself in a similar situation. Challenged by the host to drink, urged and almost forced to swallow a quantity of wine against his own inclination, he proposed a counter challenge in the way of eating, and made the following ludicrous and original proposal to the company, that two or three legs of mutton should be prepared, and he would then contest the point of who could devour most meat; and certainly it seems as reasonable to compel people to *eat*, as to compel them to drink, beyond the natural cravings of nature.

The situation of ladies, too, must frequently have been very disagreeable, when, for instance, gentlemen came

upstairs in a condition most unfit for female society. Indeed they were often compelled to fly from scenes which were most unfitting for them to witness. They were expected to get out of the way at the proper time, or when a hint was given them to do so. At Glasgow sixty years ago, when the time had come for the *bowl* to be introduced, some jovial and thirsty member of the company proposed as a toast, " The trade of Glasgow and *the outward bound* ; " the hint was taken, and silks and satins moved off to the drawing-room.

In my part of the country the traditionary stories of drinking prowess are quite marvellous. On Deeside there flourished a certain Saunders Paul (whom I remember an old man), an innkeeper at Banchory. He was said to have drank whisky, glass for glass, to the claret of Mr. Maule and the Laird of Skene for a whole evening ; and in those days there was a traditional story of his despatching, at one sitting, in company with a character celebrated for conviviality—one of the men employed to float rafts of timber down the Dee—three dozen of porter. Of this Mr. Paul it was recorded, that on being asked if he considered porter as a wholesome beverage, he replied, " Oh yes, if you don't take above a dozen." Saunders Paul was, as I have said, the innkeeper at Banchory ; his friend and *porter* companion was drowned in the Dee, and when told that the body had been found down the stream below Crathes, he coolly remarked, " I am surprised at that, for I never kenn'd him pass the inn before without comin' in for a glass."

Some relatives of mine travelling in the Highlands were amused by observing in a small road-side public-house a party drinking, whose apparatus for conviviality called forth the dry, quaint humour which is so thoroughly Scottish. Three drovers had met together and were celebrating their meeting by a liberal consumption of

whiskey; the inn could only furnish one glass without a bottom, and this the party passed on from one to another. A queer-looking pawky chield, whenever the glass came to his turn, remarked most gravely, "I think we wadna be the waur of some water," taking care, however, never to add any of the simple element, but quietly drank off his glass.

There was a sort of infatuation in the supposed dignity and manliness attached to powers of deep potation, and the fatal effects of drinking were spoken of in a manner both reckless and unfeeling. Thus, I have been assured that a well-known old laird of the old school expressed himself with great indignation at the charge brought against hard drinking that it had actually *killed* people. "Na, na, I never knew onybody killed wi' drinking, but I hae kend some that deed in the training." A positive *éclat* was attached to the accomplished and well-trained consumer of claret or of whisky toddy, which gave an importance and even merit to the practice of drinking, and which had a most injurious effect. I am afraid some of the Pleydels of the old school would have looked with the most ineffable contempt on the degeneracy of the present generation in this respect, and that the temperance movement would be little short of insanity in their eyes; and this leads me to a remark.—In considering this portion of our subject, we should bear in mind a distinction. The change we now speak of involves more than a mere change of a custom or practice in social life. It is a change in men's sentiments and feelings on a certain great question of morals. Except we enter into this distinction we cannot appreciate the extent of the change which has really taken place in regard to intemperate habits.

I have an anecdote from a descendant of Principal Robertson, of an address made to him, which showed the real importance attached to all that concerned the

system of drinking in his time. The Principal had been invited to spend some days in a country house, and the minister of the parish (a jovial character) had been asked to meet him. Before dinner he went up to Dr. Robertson and addressed him confidentially, "Doctor, I understand ye are a brother of my gude freend Peter Robertson of Edinburgh, therefore I'll gie ye a piece of advice,—Bend[1] weel to the Madeira at dinner, for here ye'll get little o't after." I have known persons who held that a man who could not drink must have a degree of feebleness and imbecility of character. But as this is an important point, I will adduce the higher authority of Lord Cockburn, and quote from him two examples, very different certainly in their nature, but both bearing upon the question. I refer to what he says of Lord Hermand—"With Hermand drinking was a virtue; he had a sincere respect for drinking, indeed a high moral approbation, and a serious compassion for the poor wretches who *could* not indulge in it, and with due contempt of those who could but did not;" and, secondly, I refer to Lord Cockburn's pages for an anecdote which illustrates the perverted feeling I refer to, now happily no longer existing. It relates the opinion expressed by an old drunken writer of Selkirk (whose name is not mentioned) regarding his anticipation of professional success for Mr. Cranstoun, afterwards Lord Corehouse. Sir Walter Scott, William Erskine, and Cranstoun had dined with this Selkirk writer, and Scott, of hardy, strong and healthy frame, had matched the writer himself in the matter of whisky punch. Poor Cranstoun, of refined and delicate mental and bodily temperament, was a bad hand at such work, and was soon off the field. On the party breaking up, the Selkirk writer expressed his admiration of Scott, assuring him that *he* would rise high in the profession, and adding: "I'll tell ye what, Maister Walter, that lad Cranstoun may

[1] Old Scotch for drink hard.

get to the tap o' the bar, if he can ; but tak my word for't, it's no be by drinking."

A legal friend has told me of a celebrated circuit where Lord Hermand was judge, and Clephane depute-advocate. The party got drunk at Ayr, and so continued (although quite able for their work) till the business was concluded at Jedburgh. Some years after my informant heard that this circuit had, at Jedburgh, acquired the permanent name of the "*daft* circuit."

Lord Cockburn was fond of describing a circuit scene at Stirling, in his early days at the bar, under the presidency of his friend and connection Lord Hermand. After the circuit dinner, and when drinking had gone on for some time, young Cockburn observed places becoming vacant in the social circle, but no one going out at the door. He found that the individuals had dropt down under the table. He took the hint, and by this ruse retired from the scene. He lay quiet till the beams of the morning sun penetrated the apartment. The judge and some of his staunch friends coolly walked up stairs, washed their hands and faces, came down for breakfast, and went into court quite fresh and fit for work.

The feeling of importance frequently attached to powers of drinking, was formally attested by a well-known western baronet of convivial habits and convivial memory. He was desirous of bearing testimony to the probity, honour, and other high moral qualities of a friend whom he wished to commend. Having fully stated these claims to consideration and respect, he deemed it proper to notice also his *convivial* attainments ; he added accordingly, with cautious approval on so important a point,— "and he is a fair drinker."[1]

[1] A friend learned in Scottish history suggests an ingenious remark, that this might mean more than a mere *full drinker*. To drink "fair," used to imply that the person drank in the same proportion as the company ; to drink more would be unmannerly ; to drink less might imply some unfair motive. Either interpretation

The following anecdote is an amusing sample of Scottish servant humour and acuteness in measuring the extent of consumption by a convivial party in Forfarshire. The party had met at a farmer's house not far from Arbroath, to celebrate the reconciliation of two neighbouring farmers who had long been at enmity. The host was pressing and hospitable; the party sat late, and consumed a vast amount of whisky toddy. The wife was penurious, and grudged the outlay. When at last, at a morning hour, the party dispersed, the lady, who had not slept in her anxiety, looked over the stairs and eagerly asked the servant girl, "How many bottles of whisky have they used, Betty?" The lass, who had not to pay for the whisky, but had been obliged to go to the well to fetch the water for the toddy, coolly answered, "I dinna ken, mem, but they've drunken sax gang o' watter."

We cannot imagine a better illustration of the general habits that prevailed in Scottish society in regard to drinking about the time we speak of than one which occurs in the recently published *Memoirs of a Banking House*, that of the late Sir William Forbes, Bart., of Pitsligo. The book comprises much that is interesting to the family, and to Scotchmen. It contains a pregnant hint as to the manners of polite society and business habits in those days. Of John Coutts, one of four brothers connected with the house, Sir William records how he was "more correct in his conduct than the others; so much so, that Sir William *never but once* saw him in the counting-house disguised with liquor, and incapable of transacting business."

In the Highlands this sort of feeling extended to an almost incredible extent, even so much as to obscure the moral and religious sentiments. Of this a striking proof was afforded in a circumstance which took place

shows the importance attached to drinking and all that concerned it.

in my own church soon after I came into it. One of our Gaelic clergy had so far forgotten himself as to appear in the church somewhat the worse of liquor. This having happened so often as to come to the ears of the Bishop, he suspended him from the performance of divine service. Against this decision the people were a little disposed to rebel, because, according to their Highland notions, "a gentleman was no the waur for being able to tak' a gude glass o' whisky." These were the notions of a people in whose eyes the power of swallowing whisky conferred distinction, and with whom inability to take the fitting quantity was a mark of a mean and futile character. Sad to tell, the funeral rites of Highland chieftains were not supposed to have been duly celebrated except there was an immoderate and often fatal consumption of whisky. It has been related that at the last funeral in the Highlands, conducted according to the traditions of the olden times, several of the guests fell victims to the usage, and actually died of the excesses.

This phase of old and happily almost obsolete Scottish intemperance at funeral solemnities, must have been peculiarly revolting. Instances of this horrid practice being carried to a great extent are traditionary in every part of the country. I am assured of the truth of the following anecdote by a son of the gentleman who acted as chief mourner on the occasion :—About seventy years ago, an old maiden lady died in Strathspey. Just previous to her death she sent for her grand-nephew, and said to him, "Willy, I'm deein', and as ye'll hae the charge o' a' I have, mind now that as much whisky is to be used at my funeral as there was at my baptism." Willy neglected to ask the old lady what the quantity of whisky used at the baptism was, but when the day of the funeral arrived, believed her orders would be best fulfilled by allowing each guest to drink as much as he pleased. The churchyard where the body was to be

deposited was about ten miles distant from where the death occurred. It was a short day in November, and when the funeral party came to the churchyard, the shades of night had considerably closed in. The grave-digger, whose patience had been exhausted in waiting, was not in the least willing to accept of Captain G——'s (the chief mourner) apology for delay. After looking about him he put the anxious question, "But, Captain, whaur's Miss Ketty?" The reply was, "In her coffin, to be sure, and get it into the earth as fast as you can." There, however, was no coffin; the procession had sojourned at a country inn by the way—had rested the body on a dyke—started without it—and had to postpone the interment until next day. My correspondent very justly adds the remark, "What would be thought of indulgence in drinking habits now that could lead to such a result?"

Many scenes of a similar incongruous character are still traditionally connected with such occasions. Within the last thirty years, a laird of Dundonald, a small estate in Ross-shire, died at Inverness. There was open house for some days, and great eating and drinking. Here the corpse commenced its progress towards its appointed home on the coast, and people followed in multitudes to give it a partial convoy, all of whom had to be entertained. It took altogether a fortnight to bury poor Dundonald, and great expense must have been incurred. This, however, is looked back to at Inverness as the last of the real grand old Highland funerals. Such notions of what is due to the memory of the departed have now become unusual if not obsolete. I myself witnessed the first decided change in this matter. I officiated at the funeral of the late Duke of Sutherland. The procession was a mile long. Refreshments were provided for 7,000 persons; beef, bread, and beer, but not one glass of whisky was allowed on the property that day!

It may, perhaps, be said that the change we speak of is not peculiar to Scotland; that in England the same change has been apparent, and that drunkenness has passed away in the higher circles, as a matter of course, as refinement and taste made an advancement in society. This is true. But there were some features of the question which were peculiar to Scotland, and which at one time rendered it less probable that intemperance would give way in the north. It seemed in some quarters to have taken deeper root amongst us. The system of pressing, or of *compelling* guests to drink seemed more inveterate. Nothing can more powerfully illustrate the deep-rooted character of intemperate habits in families than an anecdote which was related to me, as coming from the late Mr. Mackenzie, author of the *Man of Feeling*. He had been involved in a regular drinking party. He was keeping as free from the usual excesses as he was able, and as he marked companions around him falling victims to the power of drink, he himself dropped off under the table among the slain, as a measure of precaution, and lying there, his attention was called to a small pair of hands working at his throat; on asking what it was, a voice replied, "Sir, I'm the lad that's to lowse the neck-cloths." Here, then, was a family, where, on drinking occasions, it was the appointed duty of one of the household to attend, and, when the guests were becoming helpless, to untie their cravats in fear of apoplexy or suffocation. We ought certainly to be grateful for the change which has taken place from such a system; for this change has made a great revolution in Scottish social life. The charm and the romance long attached in the minds of some of our countrymen to the whole system and concerns of hard drinking was indeed most lamentable and absurd. At tavern suppers, where, nine times out of ten, it was the express *object* of those who went to get drunk, such stuff as "regal purple stream," "rosy

wine," "quaffing the goblet," "bright sparkling nectar," "chasing the rosy hours," and so on, tended to keep up the delusion, and make it a monstrous fine thing for men to sit up drinking half the night, to have frightful headaches all next day, to make maudlin idiots of themselves as they went home, and to become brutes amongst their family when they got home. And here I may introduce the mention of a practice connected with the convivial habits of which we have been speaking; but which has for some time passed away, at least from private tables—I mean the absurd system of calling for toasts and sentiments each time the glasses were filled. During dinner not a drop could be touched, except in conjunction with others, and with each drinking to the health of each. But toasts came *after* dinner. I can just remember the practice in partial operation, and my astonishment as a mere boy, when accidentally dining at table and hearing my mother called up to "give the company a gentleman," is one of my very earliest reminiscences. Lord Cockburn must have remembered them well, and I will quote his most amusing account of the effects:—"After dinner, and before the ladies retired, there generally began what was called '*Rounds*' of toasts, when each gentleman named an absent lady, and each lady an absent gentleman, separately; or one person was required to give an absent lady, and another person was required to match a gentleman with that lady, and the persons named were toasted, generally, with allusions and jokes about the fitness of the union. And worst of all, there were 'Sentiments.' These were short epigrammatic sentences expressive of moral feelings and virtues, and were thought refined and elegant productions. A faint conception of their nauseousness may be formed from the following examples, every one of which I have heard given a thousand times, and which indeed I only recollect from their being favourites. The glasses being filled, a person was asked for his or for her

sentiment, when this, or something similar, was committed, 'may the pleasures of the evening bear the reflections of the morning;' or, 'may the friends of our youth be the companions of our old age;' or, 'delicate pleasures to susceptible minds;' 'may the honest heart never feel distress;' 'may the hand of charity wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow.' The conceited, the ready, or the reckless, hackneyed in the art, had a knack of making new sentiments applicable to the passing incidents with great ease. But it was a dreadful oppression on the timid or the awkward. They used to shudder, ladies particularly; for nobody was spared when their turn in the *round* approached. Many a struggle and blush did it cost; but this seemed only to excite the tyranny of the masters of the craft; and compliance could never be avoided, except by more torture than yielding. . . . It is difficult for those who have been under a more natural system to comprehend how a sensible man, a respectable matron, a worthy old maid, and especially a girl, could be expected to go into company easily, on such conditions."[1]

This accompaniment of domestic drinking, I mean of accompanying each glass by a toast or sentiment—the practice of which is now confined to public entertainments—was then invariable in private parties, and was supposed to enliven and promote the good fellowship of the social circle. Thus Ferguson in one of his poems, in describing a dinner, says:—

> "The grace is said; it's nae ower lang,
> The claret reams in bells.
> Quo' Deacon, 'Let the toast round gang
> Come, here's our noble sels
> Weel met the day.'"

There was a great variety of these toasts, some of them exclusively Scottish. A correspondent has favoured me with a few reminiscences of such incentives to inebriety.

[1] Lord Cockburn's *Memorials of his Time*, p. 37, *et seq.*

The ordinary form of drinking a health was in the address, " Here's t'ee."

Then such as the following were named by successive members of the company at the call of the host :—

The land o' cakes (Scotland).
Mair freens and less need o' them.
Thumping luck and fat weans.
When we're gaun up the hill o' fortune may we ne'er meet a frien' comin' doun.
May ne'er waur be amang us.
May the hinges o' friendship never rust, or the wings o' luve lose a feather.
Here's to them that lo'es us, or lends us a lift.
Here's health to the sick, stilts to the lame, claise to the back, and brose to the wame.
Here's health, wealth, wit, and meal.
The deil rock them in a creel that does na' wish us a' weel.
Horny hands and weather beaten haffets (cheeks).
The rending o' rocks and the pu'in doun o' auld houses.

The above two belong to the mason craft; the first implies a wish for plenty of work, and health to do it; the second, to erect new buildings and clear away old ones.

May the winds o' adversity ne'er blaw open our door.
May poortith ne'er throw us in the dirt, or gowd into the high saddle. [1]
May the mouse ne'er leave our meal pock wi' the tear in its ee.
Blythe may we a' be.
Ill may we never see.
Breeks and brochan (brose).
May we ne'er want a freend or a drappie to gie him.
Gude een to you a', an' tak your nappy.
A willy-waught's a gude night cappy. [2]
May we a' be canty and cosy,
An' ilk hae a wife in his bozy.
A cozy but, and a canty ben,
To couthie [3] *women and trusty men.*
The ingle neuk wi' routh [4] *o' bannocks and bairns.*
Here's to him wha winna beguile ye.
Mair sense and mair siller.
Horn, corn, wool, an' yarn. [5]

The system of giving toasts was so regularly established, that collections of them were published to add

[1] May we never be cast down by adversity, or unduly elevated by prosperity.
[2] A toast at parting or breaking up of the party.
[3] Loving. [4] Plenty. [5] Toast for agricultural dinners.

brilliancy to the festive board. By the kindness of the librarian, I have seen a little volume which is in the Writers' Library of Edinburgh. It is entitled *The Gentleman's New Bottle Companion*, Edinburgh, printed in the year MDCCLXXVII. It contains various toasts and sentiments which the writer considered to be suitable to such occasions. Of the taste and decency of the companies where some of them could be made use of, the less is said the better.

I have heard also of large traditionary collections of toasts and sentiments belonging to old clubs and societies extending back above a century, but I have not seen any of them, and I believe my readers will think they have had quite enough.

The favourable reaction which has taken place in regard to the whole system of intemperance may very fairly, in the first place, be referred to an improved *moral* feeling. But other causes have also assisted; and it is curious to observe how the different changes in the modes of society bear upon one another. The alteration in the convivial habits which we are noticing in our own country may be partly due to alteration of hours. The old plan of early dining favoured a system of suppers, and after supper was a great time for convivial songs and sentiments. This of course induced drinking to a late hour. Most drinking songs imply the night as the season of conviviality—thus in a popular madrigal :—

> "By the gaily circling glass,
> We can tell how minutes pass,
> By the hollow cask we're told,
> How the waning *night* grows old."

And Burns thus marks the time :—

> "It is the moon I ken her horn,
> That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
> She shines sae bright, to wyle us hame,
> But by my sooth she'll wait a wee."

The young people of the present day have no idea

of the state of matters in regard to the supper system when it was the normal condition of society. The late dining hours may make the social circle more formal, but they have been far less favourable to drinking propensities. After such dinners as ours are now, suppers are clearly out of the question. One is astonished to look back and recall the scenes to which were attached associations of hilarity, conviviality, and enjoyment. Drinking parties were protracted beyond the whole Sunday, having begun by a dinner on Saturday; imbecility and prostrate helplessness were a common result of these bright and jovial scenes; and by what perversion of language, or by what obliquity of sentiment, the notions of pleasure could be attached to scenes of such excess—to the nausea, the disgust of sated appetite, and the racking headache—it is not easy to explain. There were men of heads so hard, and of stomachs so insensible, that, like my friend Saunders Paul, they could stand anything in the way of drink. But to men in general, and to the more delicate constitutions, such a life must have been a cause of great misery. To a certain extent, and up to a certain point, wine may be a refreshment and a wholesome stimulant; nay, it is a medicine, and a valuable one, and as such, comes recommended on fitting occasions by the physician. *Beyond* this point, as sanctioned and approved by nature, the use of wine is only degradation. Well did the sacred writer call wine, when thus taken in excess, "a mocker." It makes all men equal, because it makes them all idiotic. It allures them into a vicious indulgence, and then mocks their folly, by depriving them of any sense they may ever have possessed.

Reference has already been made to Lord Hermand's opinion of drinking, and to the high estimation in which he held a staunch drinker, according to the testimony of Lord Cockburn. There is a remarkable corroboration of this opinion in a current anecdote which is traditionary

regarding the same learned judge. A case of some great offence was tried before him, and the counsel pleaded extenuation for his client in that he was *drunk* when he committed the offence. "Drunk!" exclaimed Lord Hermand, in great indignation; "if he could do such a thing when he was drunk, what might he not have done when he was *sober*!" evidently implying that the normal condition of human nature and its most hopeful one, was a condition of intoxication.

Of the prevalence of hard drinking in certain houses as a system, a remarkable proof is given at page 66. The following anecdote still further illustrates the subject, and corresponds exactly with the story of the "loosing the cravats," which was performed for guests in a state of helpless inebriety by one of the household. There had been a carousing party at Castle Grant, many years ago, and as the evening advanced towards morning, two Highlanders were in attendance to carry the guests upstairs, it being understood that none could by any other means arrive at their sleeping apartments. One or two of the guests, however, whether from their abstinence or their superior strength of head, were walking upstairs, and declined the proffered assistance. The attendants were quite astonished, and indignantly exclaimed, "Agh, it's sare cheenged times at Castle Grant, when gentlemens can gang to bed on their ain feet."

There was a practice in many Scottish houses which favoured most injuriously the national tendency to spirit drinking, and that was a foolish and inconsiderate custom of offering a glass on all occasions as a mark of kindness or hospitality. I mention the custom only for the purpose of offering a remonstrance. It should never be done. Even now, I am assured, small jobs (carpenter's or blacksmith's, or such like) are constantly remunerated in the West Highlands of Scotland—and doubtless in many other parts of the country—not by a

pecuniary payment, but by a *dram*; if the said dram be taken from a *speerit*-decanter out of the family press or cupboard, the compliment is esteemed the greater, and the offering doubly valued.

A very amusing dialogue between a landlord and his tenant on this question of the dram has been sent to me. John Colquhoun, an aged Dumbartonshire tenant, is asked by the Laird of C. on Loch Lomond side, his landlord, to stay a minute till he *tastes*. "Now, John," says the Laird. "Only half a glass, Camstraddale," meekly pleads John. "Which half?" rejoins the Laird, "the upper or the lower?" John grins, and turns off *both*—the *upper* and *lower* too.

The upper and lower portions of the glass furnish another drinking anecdote. A very greedy old lady employed another John Colquhoun to cut the grass upon the lawn, and enjoined him to cut it very close, adding, as a reason for the injunction, that one inch at the bottom was worth two at the top. Having finished his work much to her satisfaction, the old lady got out the whisky bottle and a tapering wine glass, which she filled about half full; John suggested that it would be better to fill it up, slily adding, "fill it up, mem, for it's no like the gress, an inch at the tap's worth twa at the bottom."

But the most whimsical anecdote connected with the subject of drink, is one traditionary in the south of Scotland, regarding an old Gallowegian lady, disclaiming more drink, under the following circumstances:—The old generation of Galloway lairds were a primitive and hospitable race, but their conviviality sometimes led to awkward occurrences. In former days, when roads were bad, and wheeled vehicles almost unknown, an old laird was returning from a supper party, with his lady mounted behind him on horseback. On crossing the River Urr, at a ford at a point where it joins the

sea, the old lady dropped off, but was not missed till her husband reached his door, when, of course, there was an immediate search made. The party, who were despatched in quest of her, arrived just in time to find her remonstrating with the advancing tide, which trickled into her mouth, in these words, "No anither drap; neither het nor cauld."

I would now introduce, as a perfect illustration of this portion of our subject, two descriptions of clergymen, well-known men in their day, which are taken from Dr. Carlyle's work, already referred to. Of Dr. Alexander Webster, a clergyman, and one of his contemporaries, he writes thus—"Webster, leader of the high-flying party, had justly obtained much respect amongst the clergy, and all ranks indeed, for having established the Widow's Fund. . . . His appearance of great strictness in religion, to which he was bred under his father, who was a popular minister of the Tolbooth Church, not acting in restraint of his convivial humour, he was held to be excellent company even by those of dissolute manners. While being a five-bottle man, he could lay them all under the table. This had brought on him the nickname of Dr. Bonum Magnum in the time of faction. But never being indecently the worse of liquor, and a love of claret, to any degree, not being reckoned in those days a sin in Scotland, all his excesses were pardoned."

Dr. Patrick Cumming, also a clergyman, and a contemporary, he describes in the following terms:—"Dr. Patrick Cumming was, at this time, 1751, at the head of the moderate interest, and had his temper been equal to his talents, might have kept it long, for he had both learning and sagacity, and very agreeable conversation, *with a constitution able to bear the conviviality of the times.*"

Now, of all the anecdotes and facts which I have collected, or of all which I have ever heard to illustrate

the state of Scottish society in the past times, as regards its habits of intemperance, this assuredly surpasses them all. Of two well-known, distinguished, and leading clergymen in the middle of the eighteenth century, one who had "obtained much respect," and "had the appearance of great strictness in religion," is described as an enormous drinker of claret; the other, an able leader of a powerful section in the Church, is described as *owing* his influence to his power of meeting the conviviality of the times. Suppose for a moment a future biographer should write in this strain of eminent divines, and should apply to distinguished members of the Scottish Church in 1863, such description as the following:—"Dr. —— was a man who took a leading part in all Church affairs at this time, and was much looked up to by the evangelical section of the General Assembly; he could always carry off without difficulty his five bottles of claret. Dr. —— had great influence in society, and led the opposite party in the General Assembly, as he could take his place in all companies, and drink on fair terms at the most convivial tables!!" Why, this seems to us so monstrous, that we can scarcely believe Dr. Carlyle's account of matters in his day to be possible.

There is a story which illustrates, with terrible force, the power which drinking had obtained in Scottish social life. I have been deterred from bringing it forward, as too shocking for production. But as the story is pretty well known, and its truth vouched for on high authority, I venture to give it, as affording a proof that, in those days, no consideration, not even the most awful that affects human nature, could be made to outweigh the claims of a determined conviviality. It may, I think, be mentioned also, in the way of warning men generally against the hardening and demoralising effects of habitual drunkenness. The story is this:—At a prolonged drinking bout, one of the party remarked, "What gars the laird of

Garskadden luk sae gash ?"[1] "Ou," says his neighbour, the Laird of Kilmardinny, "Garskadden's been wi' his Maker these twa hours; I saw him step awa, but I didna like to disturb gude company!"[2]

Before closing this subject of excess in *drinking*, I may refer to another indulgence in which our countrymen are generally supposed to partake more largely than their neighbours. I mean snuff-taking. The popular southern ideas of a Scotchman and his snuff-box are inseparable. Smoking does not appear to have been practised more in Scotland than in England, and if Scotchmen are sometimes intemperate in the use of snuff, it is certainly a more innocent excess than intemperance in whisky. I recollect, amongst the common people in the north, a mode of taking snuff which showed a determination to make the *most* of it, and which indicated somewhat of intemperance in the enjoyment; this was to receive it, not through a pinch between the fingers, but through a quill or little bone ladle, which forced it up the nose. But besides smoking and snuffing, I have a reminiscence of a *third* use of tobacco, which I apprehend is now quite obsolete. Some of my readers will be surprised when I name this forgotten luxury. It was called *plugging*, and consisted (*horresco referens*) in poking a piece of pig-tail tobacco right into the nostril. I remember this distinctly, and now, at a distance of sixty years, I recall my utter astonishment, as a boy, at seeing my grand-uncle, with whom I lived in early days, put a thin piece of tobacco fairly up his nose. I suppose the plug acted as a continued stimulant on the olfactory nerve, and was, in short, like taking a perpetual pinch of snuff.

The inveterate snuff-taker, like the dram drinker, felt

[1] Ghastly.

[2] The scene is described and place mentioned in Dr. Strang's *Account of Glasgow Clubs*, p. 104, 2nd edit.

severely the being deprived of his accustomed stimulant, as in the following instance :—A severe snowstorm in the Highlands, which lasted for several weeks, having stopped all communication betwixt neighbouring hamlets, the snuff-boxes were soon reduced to their last pinch. Borrowing and begging from all the neighbours within reach were first resorted to, but when these failed, all were alike reduced to the longing which unwillingly-abstinent snuff-takers alone know. The minister of the parish was amongst the unhappy number ; the craving was so intense, that study was out of the question, and he became quite restless. As a last resort, the beadle was despatched, through the snow, to a neighbouring glen in the hope of getting a supply ; but he came back as unsuccessful as he went. " What's to be dune, John ? " was the minister's pathetic inquiry. John shook his head, as much as to say, that he could not tell ; but immediately thereafter started up, as if a new idea had occurred to him. He came back in a few minutes, crying, " Hae." The minister, too eager to be scrutinising, took a long, deep pinch, and then said, " Whaur did you get it ? " " I soupit[1] the poupit," was John's expressive reply. The minister's accumulated superfluous Sabbath snuff now came into good use.

It does not appear that at this time a similar excess in *eating* accompanied this prevalent tendency to excess in drinking. Scottish tables were at that period plain and abundant, but epicurism or gluttony do not seem to have been handmaids to drunkenness. A humorous anecdote, however, of a full-eating laird, may well accompany those which appertain to the *drinking* lairds.—A lady in the north having watched the proceedings of a guest, who ate long and largely, she ordered the servant to take away, as he had at last laid down his knife and fork. To her surprise, however, he resumed his work, and

[1] Swept.

she apologised to him, saying, "I thought, Mr. ——, you had done." "Oh, so I had, mem; but I just fan' a doo in the *redd* o' my plate." He had discovered a pigeon lurking amongst the bones and refuse of his plate, and could not resist finishing it.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

ON THE OLD SCOTTISH DOMESTIC SERVANT

We come now to a subject on which a great change has taken place in this country during my own experience. I allude to the third division which we proposed of these desultory remarks, viz., those peculiarities of intercourse which some years back marked the connection between masters and servants. In many Scottish houses a great familiarity prevailed between members of the family and the domestics. For this many reasons might have been assigned. Indeed, when we consider the simple modes of life which discarded the ideas of ceremony or etiquette, the retired and uniform style of living which afforded few opportunities for any change in the domestic arrangements, and when we add to these a free, unrestrained, unformal, and natural style of intercommunion, which seems rather a national characteristic, we need not be surprised to find in quiet Scottish families a sort of intercourse with old domestics which can hardly be looked for at a time, when habits are so changed, and where much of the quiet eccentricity belonging to us as a national characteristic, is almost necessarily softened down or driven out. Many circumstances conspired to promote familiarity with old domestics which are now entirely changed. We take the case of a domestic coming early into service and passing year after year in the same family. The servant grows up into old age and confirmed habits when the laird is becoming a man, a husband, father of a family. The domestic cannot forget the days when his master was a child, riding on his back, applying to him for

help in difficulties about his fishing, his rabbits, his pony, his going to school. All the family know how attached he is; nobody likes to speak harshly to him. He is a privileged man. The faithful old servant of thirty, forty, or fifty years, if with a tendency to be jealous, cross, and interfering, becomes a great trouble. Still the relative position was the result of good feelings. If the familiarity sometimes became a nuisance, it was a wholesome nuisance, and relic of a simpler time gone by. But the case of the old servant, whether agreeable or troublesome, was often so fixed and established in the households of past days, that there was scarce a possibility of getting away from it. The well-known story of the answer of one of these domestic tyrants to the irritated master, who was making an effort to free himself from the thraldom, shows the idea entertained by *one* of the parties, at least, of the permanency of the tenure. I am assured by a friend that the true edition of the story was this—An old Mr. Erskine of Dun had one of these old retainers, under whose language and unreasonable assumption he had long groaned. He had almost determined to bear it no longer, when, walking out with his man, on crossing a field, the master exclaimed, "There's a hare." Andrew looked at the place, and coolly replied, "What a big lee, it's a cauff." The master, quite angry now, plainly told the old domestic that they *must* part. But the tried servant of forty years, not dreaming of the possibility of *his* dismissal, innocently asked, "Ay, sir; whare ye gaun? I'm sure ye're aye best at hame;" supposing that, if there were to be any disruption, it must be the master who would change the place. An example of a similar fixedness of tenure in an old servant was afforded in an anecdote related of an old coachman long in the service of a noble lady, and who gave all the trouble and annoyance which he conceived were the privileges of his position in the family. At last the lady fairly gave him notice to quit,

and told him he must go. The only satisfaction she got was the quiet answer, "Na, na, my lady; I druve ye to your marriage, and I shall stay to drive ye to your burial." Indeed, we have heard of a still stronger assertion of his official position by one who met an order to quit his master's service by the cool reply, "Na, na; I'm no gangin'. If ye dinna ken whan ye've a good servant, I ken whan I've a gude place."

It is but fair, however, to give an anecdote in which the master and the servant's position was *reversed*, in regard to a wish for change :—An old servant of a relation of my own, with an ungovernable temper, became at last so weary of his master's irascibility, that he declared he must leave, and gave as his reason the fits of anger which came on and produced such great annoyance that he could not stand it any longer. His master, unwilling to lose him, tried to coax him by reminding him that the anger was soon off. "Ay," replied the other very shrewdly, "but it's nae suner aff than it's on again." I remember well an old servant of the old school, who had been fifty years domesticated in a family. Indeed I well remember the celebration of the half-century service completed. There were rich scenes with Sandy and his mistress. Let me recall you both to memory. Let me think of you, the kind, generous, warm-hearted mistress. A gentlewoman by descent and by feeling. A true friend, a sincere Christian; and let me think, too, of you, Sandy, an honest, faithful, and attached member of the family. For you were in that house rather as a humble friend than a servant. But out of this fifty years of attached service there sprang a sort of domestic relation and freedom of intercourse which would surprise people in these days. And yet Sandy knew his place. Like Corporal Trim, who, although so familiar and admitted to so much familiarity with my Uncle Toby, never failed in the respectful address—never forgot to say "your

honour." At a dinner-party Sandy was very active about changing his mistress's plate, and whipped it off when he saw that she had got a piece of rich pattee upon it. His mistress, not liking such rapid movements, and at the same time knowing that remonstrance was in vain, exclaimed, " Hout, Sandy, I'm no dune," and dabbed her fork into the pattee as it disappeared, to rescue a morsel. I remember her praise of English mutton was a great annoyance to the Scottish prejudices of Sandy. One day she was telling me of a triumph Sandy had upon that subject. The smell of the joint roasting had become very offensive through the house. The lady called out to Sandy to have the doors closed, and adding, " that must be some horrid Scotch mutton you have got." To Sandy's delight, this was a leg of *English* mutton his mistress had expressly chosen, and, as she significantly told me, " Sandy never let that down upon me."

On Deeside there existed, in my recollection, besides the Saunders Paul I have alluded to, a number of extraordinary acute and humorous Scottish characters amongst the lower classes. The native gentry enjoyed their humour, and hence arose a familiarity of intercourse which called forth many amusing scenes and quaint rejoinders. A celebrated character of this description bore the sobriquet of " Boaty." He had acted as Charon of the Dee at Banchory, and passed the boat over the river before there was a bridge. Boaty had many curious sayings recorded of him. When speaking of the gentry around, he characterised them according to their occupations and activity of habits—thus, " As to Mr. Russell of Blackha', he just works himsell like a paid labourer ; Mr. Duncan's a' the day fish, fish ; but Sir Robert's a perfect gentleman ; he does naething, naething." Boaty was a first-rate salmon-fisher himself, and was much sought after by amateurs who came to Banchory for the sake of the sport afforded by the beautiful Dee. He was, perhaps,

a little spoiled, and presumed upon the indulgence and familiarity shown to him in the way of his craft,—as, for example, he was in attendance with his boat on a sportsman who was both skilful and successful, for he caught salmon after salmon. Between each fish catching he solaced himself with a good pull from a flask, which he returned to his pocket, however, without offering to let Boaty have any participation in the refreshment. Boaty, partly a little professionally jealous, perhaps, at the success, and partly indignant at receiving less than his usual attention on such occasions, and seeing no prospect of amendment, deliberately pulled the boat to shore, shouldered the oars, rods, landing-nets, and all the fishing apparatus which he had provided, and set off homewards. His companion, far from considering his day's work to be over, and keen for more sport, was amazed, and peremptorily ordered him to come back. But all the answer made by the offended Boaty was, "Na, na; them 'at drink by themsells may just fish by themsells."

The charge these old domestics used to take of the interests of the family, and the cool way in which they took upon them to protect those interests, sometimes led to very provoking, and sometimes to very ludicrous exhibitions of importance. A friend told me of a dinner scene illustrative of this sort of interference which had happened at Airth in the last generation. Mrs. Murray of Abercairney had been amongst the guests, and at dinner one of the family noticed that she was looking for the proper spoon to help herself with salt. The old servant Thomas was appealed to, that the want might be supplied. He did not notice the appeal. It was repeated in a more peremptory manner, "Thomas, Mrs. Murray has not a salt spoon;" to which he replied most emphatically, "Last time Mrs. Murray dined here, we *lost* a salt spoon." An old servant who took a similar charge of everything

that went on in the family, having observed that his master thought he had drunk wine with every lady at table, but had overlooked one, jogged his memory with the question, " What ails ye at her wi' the green gown ? "

In my own family I know a case of a very long service, and where, no doubt, there was much interest and attachment; but it was a case where the temper had not softened under the influence of years, but had rather assumed that form of disposition which we denominate *crusty*. My grand-uncle, Sir A. Ramsay, died in 1806, and left a domestic who had been in his service since he was ten years of age ; and being at the time of his master's death past fifty or well on to sixty, he must have been more than forty years a servant in the family. From the retired life my grand-uncle had been leading, Jamie Layal had much of his own way, and, like many a domestic so situated, he did not like to be contradicted, and, in fact, could not bear to be found fault with. My uncle, who had succeeded to a part of my grand-uncle's property, succeeded also to Jamie Layal, and from respect to his late master's memory and Jamie's own services, he took him into his house, intending him to act as house servant. However, this did not answer, and he was soon kept on, more with the form than the reality of any active duty, and took any light work that was going on about the house. In this capacity it was his daily task to feed a flock of turkeys which were growing up to maturity. On one occasion, my aunt having followed him in his work, and having observed such a waste of food, that the ground was actually covered with grain which they could not eat, and which would soon be destroyed and lost, naturally remonstrated, and suggested a more reasonable and provident supply. But all the answer she got from the offended Jamie was a bitter rejoinder, " Weel, then, neist time they shall get *nane ava* ! " On another occasion a family from a distance had called whilst my uncle and aunt were out of

the house. Jamie came into the parlour to deliver the cards, or to announce that they had called. My aunt, somewhat vexed at not having been in the way, inquired what message Mr. and Mrs. Innes had left, as she had expected one. "No! no message." She returned to the charge, and asked again if they had not told him *anything* he was to repeat. Still, "No! no message." "But did they say nothing? Are you sure they said nothing?" Jamie, sadly put out and offended at being thus interrogated, at last burst forth, "They neither said ba nor bum," and indignantly left the room, banging the door after him. A characteristic anecdote of one of these old domestics I have from a friend who was acquainted with the parties concerned. The old man was standing at the sideboard and attending to the demands of a pretty large dinner party; the calls made for various wants from the company became so numerous and frequent that the attendant got quite bewildered, and lost his patience and temper; at length he gave vent to his indignation in a remonstrance addressed to the whole company, "Cry a' thegither, that's the way to be served."

I have two characteristic and dry Scottish answers, traditional in the Lothian family, supplied to me by the present excellent and highly gifted young Marquis. A Marquis of Lothian of a former generation observed in his walk two workmen very busy with a ladder to reach a bell, on which they next kept up a furious ringing. He asked what was the object of making such a din; to which the answer was, "Oh, juist, my lord, to ca' the workmen together." "Why, how many are there?" asked his lordship. "Ou, juist Sandy and me," was the quiet rejoinder. The same Lord Lothian, looking about the garden, directed his gardener's attention to a particular plum-tree, charging him to be careful of the produce of that tree, and send the *whole* of it in marked, as it was of a very particular kind. "Ou," said the

gardener, "I'll do that, my lord; there's juist twa o' them."

These dry answers of Newbattle servants remind us of a similar state of communication in a Yester domestic. Lord Tweeddale was very fond of dogs, and on leaving Yester for London, he instructed his head keeper, a quaint bodie, to give him a periodical report of the kennel, and particulars of his favourite dogs. Among the latter was an *especial* one, of the true Skye breed, called "Pickle," from which sobriquet we may form a tolerable estimate of his qualities.

It happened one day, in or about the year 1827, that poor Pickle during the absence of his master was taken unwell; and the watchful guardian immediately warned the marquis of the sad fact (and of the progress of the disease), which lasted three days—for which he sent the three following laconic despatches—

Yester, May 1st, 18—.

My Lord,
Pickle's no weel.
Your Lordship's humble servant, etc.

Yester, 2nd May, 18—.

My Lord,
Pickle will no do!
I am your Lordship's, etc.

Yester, 3rd May, 18—.

My Lord,
Pickle's dead!
I am your Lordship's, etc.

I have heard of an old Forfarshire lady who, knowing the habits of her old and spoilt servant, when she wished a note to be taken without loss of time, held it open and read it over to him, saying, "There, noo, Andrew, ye ken a' that's in't; noo dinna stop to open it, but just send it aff." Of another servant when sorely tried by an unaccustomed bustle and hurry, a very amusing anecdote has been recorded. His mistress, a woman of high rank,

who had been living in much quiet and retirement for some time, was called upon to entertain a large party at dinner. She consulted with Nichol, her faithful servant, and all the arrangements were made for the great event. As the company were arriving, the lady saw Nichol running about in great agitation, and in his shirt sleeves. She remonstrated, and said that as the guests were coming in he must put on his coat. "Indeed, my lady," was his excited reply, "indeed, there's sae muckle rinning here and rinning there, that I'm juist distrackit. I hae cuist'n my coat and waistcoat, and faith I dinna ken how lang I can thole[1] my breeks." There is often a ready wit in this class of character, marked by their replies. I have the following communicated from an ear witness: "Weel, Peggy," said a man to an old family servant, "I wonder yer aye single yet?" "Me marry," said she indignantly; "I wadna gie my single life for a' the double anes I ever saw."

An old woman was exhorting a servant once about her ways. "You serve the deevil," said she. "Me!" said the girl; "Na, na, I dinna serve the deevil, I serve ae single lady."

A baby was out with the nurse, who walked it up and down a garden. "Is't a laddie or a lassie?" said the gardener. "A laddie," said the maid. "Weel," says he, "I'm glad o' that, for there's ower mony women in the world." "Hech, man," said Jess, "div ye no ken there's aye maist sawn o' the best crap?"

The answers of servants used curiously to illustrate habits and manners of the time,—as the economical modes of her mistress' life were well touched by the lass who thus described her ways and domestic habits with her household: "She's vicious upo' the wark; but eh, she's vary mysterious o' the victualling."

A country habit of making the gathering of the con-

[1] Bear.

gregation in the churchyard previous to and after divine service an occasion for gossip and business, which I remember well, is thoroughly described in the following :— A lady, on hiring a servant-girl in the country, told her, as a great indulgence, that she should have the liberty of attending the church every Sunday, but that she would be expected to return home always immediately on the conclusion of service. The lady, however, rather unexpectedly found a positive objection raised against this apparently reasonable arrangement. "Then I canna engadge wi' ye, mem ; for 'deed I wadna gie the crack i' the kirkyard for a' the sermon."

There is another story which shows that a greater importance might be attached to the crack i' the kirkyard than was done even by the servant lass mentioned above. A rather rough subject, residing in Galloway, used to attend church regularly, as it appeared, for the *sake* of the crack. For on being taken to task for his absenting himself, he remarked, "There's nae need to gang to the kirk noo, for everybody gets a newspaper."

The changes that many of us have lived to witness in this kind of intercourse between families and old servants is a part of a still greater change—the change in that modification of the feudal system, the attachment of clans. This, also, from transfers of property and extinction of old families in the Highlands, as well as from more general causes, is passing away ; and it includes also changes in the intercourse between landed proprietors and cottagers, and abolition of harvest homes, and such meetings. People are now more independent of each other, and service is become a pecuniary and not a sentimental question. The extreme contrast of that old-fashioned Scottish intercourse of families with their servants and dependents, of which I have given some amusing examples, is found in the modern manufactory system. There the service is a mere question of personal interest. One

of our first practical engineers, and one of the first engine-makers in England, stated that he employed and paid handsomely on an average 1,200 workmen ; but that they held so little feeling for him as their master, that not above half a dozen of the number would notice him when passing him, either in the works or out of work hours. Contrast this advanced stage of dependents' indifference with the familiarity of domestic intercourse we have been describing !

It has been suggested by my esteemed friend, Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander, that Scottish anecdotes deal too exclusively with the shrewd, quaint, and pawky *humour* of our countrymen, and have not sufficiently illustrated the deep pathos and strong loving-kindness of the " kindly Scot,"—qualities which, however little appreciated across the border, abound in Scottish poetry and Scottish life. For example, to take the case before us of these old retainers, although snappy and disagreeable to the last degree in their replies, and often most provoking in their ways, they were yet deeply and sincerely attached to the family where they had so long been domesticated ; and the servant who would reply to her mistress' order to mend the fire by the short answer, " the fire's weel eneuch," would at the same time evince much interest in all that might assist her in sustaining the credit of her domestic economy, as for example, whispering in her ear at dinner. " Press the jeelies ; they winna keep ; " and had the hour of real trial and of difficulty come to the family, would have gone to the death for them, and shared their greatest privations. Dr. Alexander gives a very interesting example of kindness and affectionate attachment in an old Scottish domestic of his own family, whose quaint and odd familiarity was charming. I give it in his own words : —" When I was a child, there was an old servant at Pinkieburn, where my early days were spent, who had been all her life, I may say, in the house, for she came

to it a child, and lived without ever leaving it, till she died in it, seventy-five years of age. Her feeling to her old master, who was just two years younger than herself, was a curious compound of the deference of a servant, and the familiarity and affection of a sister. She had known him as boy, lad, man, and old man, and she seemed to have a sort of notion, that without her he must be a very helpless being indeed. 'I aye keepit the house for him, whether he was hame or awa,' was a frequent utterance of hers; and she never seemed to think the intrusion even of his own nieces, who latterly lived with him, at all legitimate. When on her death-bed, he hobbled to her room with difficulty, having just got over a severe attack of gout, to bid her farewell. I chanced to be present, but was too young to remember what passed, except one thing, which probably was rather recalled to me afterwards, than properly recollected by me. It was her last request. 'Laird,' said she (for so she always called him, though his lairdship was of the smallest), 'will ye tell them to bury me whaur I'll lie across at your feet.' I have always thought this characteristic of the old Scotch servant, and as such I send it to you."

And here I would introduce another story which struck me very forcibly as illustrating the union of the qualities referred to by Dr. Alexander. In the following narrative, how deep and tender a feeling is expressed in a brief dry sentence! I give Mr. Scott's language:[1]—"My brother and I were, during our High School vacation, some forty years ago, very much indebted to the kindness of a clever young carpenter employed in the machinery workshop of New Lanark Mills, near to which we were residing during our six weeks' holiday. It was he—Samuel Shaw, our dear companion—who first taught us to saw, and to plane, and to turn, too; and who made us the bows and arrows in which we so much delighted. The vacation over,

[1] Rev. R. Scott of Cranwell.

and our hearts very sore, but bound to Samuel Shaw for ever, our mother sought to place some pecuniary recompense in his hand at parting, for all the great kindness he had shown her boys. Samuel looked in her face, and gently moving her hand aside, with an affectionate look cast upon us, who were by, exclaimed, in a tone which had sorrow in it, 'Noo, Mrs. Scott, *ye ha'e spoilt a'*.' After such an appeal, it may be supposed no recompense, in silver or in gold, remained with Samuel Shaw."

On the subject of the old Scottish domestic, I have to acknowledge a kind communication from Lord Kinloch, which I give in his Lordship's words :—"My father had been in the counting-house of the well-known David Dale, the founder of the Lanark Mills, and eminent for his benevolence. Mr. Dale, who it would appear was a short stout man, had a person in his employment named Matthew, who was permitted that familiarity with his master which was so characteristic of the former generation. One winter day, Mr. Dale came into the counting-house, and complained that he had fallen on the ice. Matthew, who saw that his master was not much hurt, grinned a sarcastic smile. 'I fell all my length,' said Mr. Dale. 'Nae great length, sir,' said Matthew. 'Indeed, Matthew, ye need not laugh,' said Mr. Dale; 'I have hurt the sma' of my back.' 'I wunner whaur *that* is,' said Matthew." Indeed, specimens like Matthew of serving-men of the former time have latterly been fast going out, but I remember one or two specimens. Mrs. Grant of Kilgraston, the sister of Bannatyne and Lady M'Gregor Murray, had one named John in her house at Portobello. I remember how my modern ideas were offended by John's familiarity when waiting at table. "Some more wine, John," said his mistress. "There's some i' the bottle, mem," said John. A little after, "Mend the fire, John." "The fire's weel aneuch, mem," replied the impracticable John. Another "John" of my acquaintance was in the

family of Mrs. Campbell of Ardnave, mother of the Princess Polignac and the Honourable Mrs. Archibald Macdonald. A young lady visiting in the family asked John at dinner for a potato. John made no response. The request was repeated; when John, putting his mouth to her ear, said, very audibly. "There's jist twa in the dish, and they maun be keepit for the strangers."

The following was sent me by a kind correspondent —a learned Professor in India—as a sample of *squabbling* between Scottish servants. A mistress observing something peculiar in her maid's manner, addressed her, "Dear me, Tibbie, what are you so snappish about, that you go knocking the things as you dust them?" "Ou, mem, it's Jock." "Well; what has Jock been doing?" "Ou (with an indescribable, but easily imaginable toss of the head), he was angry at me, an' misca'd me, an' I said I was juist as the Lord had made me, an' ——" "Well, Tibbie?" "An' he said the Lord could hae had little to do whan he made me." The idea of Tibbie being the work of an idle moment, was one, the deliciousness of which was not likely to be relished by Tibbie.

The following characteristic anecdote of a Highland servant I have received from the same correspondent. An English gentleman, travelling in the Highlands, was rather late of coming down to dinner. Donald was sent upstairs to intimate that all was ready. He speedily returned, nodding significantly, as much as to say that it was all right. "But, Donald," said the master, after some further trial of a hungry man's patience, "are ye sure ye made the gentleman understand?" "*Understand?*" retorted Donald (who had peeped into the room and found the guest engaged at his toilet), "I'se warrant ye he understands; he's *sharping* his teeth."

There have been some very amusing instances given

of the matter-of-fact obedience paid to orders by Highland retainers when made to perform the ordinary duties of domestic servants, as when Mr. Campbell, a Highland gentleman, visiting in a country house, and telling Donald to bring everything out of the bedroom, found all its movable articles, fender, fire-irons, etc., piled up in the lobby; so literal was the poor man's sense of obedience to orders! And of this, he gave a still more extraordinary proof during his sojourn in Edinburgh, by a very ludicrous exploit. When the family moved into a house there, Mrs. Campbell gave him very particular instructions regarding visitors, explaining, that they were to be shown into the drawing-room, and no doubt used the Scotticism, "*Carry* any ladies that call upstairs." On the arrival of the first visitors, Donald was eager to show his strict attention to the mistress' orders. Two ladies came together, and Donald, seizing one in his arms, said to the other, "Bide ye there till I come for ye," and, in spite of her struggles and remonstrances, ushered the terrified visitor into Mrs. Campbell's presence in this unwonted fashion.

Another case of *literal* obedience to orders, produced a somewhat startling form of message. A servant of an old maiden lady, a patient of Dr. Poole, formerly of Edinburgh, was under orders to go to the doctor every morning to report the state of her health, how she had slept, etc., with strict injunctions *always* to add, "with her compliments." At length, one morning the girl brought this extraordinary message:—"Miss S——'s compliments, and she de'ed last night at aicht o'clock!"

I recollect, in Montrose (that fruitful field for old Scottish stories!), a most naive reply from an honest lass, servant to old Mrs. *Captain* Fullerton. A party of gentlemen had dined with Mrs. Fullerton, and they had a turkey for dinner. Mrs. F. proposed that one of the legs should be *deviled*, and the gentlemen have it served up as a relish

for their wine. Accordingly, one of the company skilled in the mystery, prepared it with pepper, cayenne, mustard, ketchup, etc. He gave it to Lizzy, and told her to take it down to the kitchen, supposing, as a matter of course, she would know that it was to be broiled, and brought back in due time. But in a little while, when it was rung for, Lizzy very innocently replied, that she had ate it up. As it was sent back to the kitchen, her only idea was that it must be for herself. But on surprise being expressed that she had eaten what was so highly peppered and seasoned, she very quaintly answered, "Ou, I liket it a' the better."

A well-known servant of the old school, was John, the servant of Pitfour, Mr. Ferguson, M.P., himself a most eccentric character, long father of the House of Commons, and a great friend of Pitt. John used to entertain the tenants on Pitfour's brief visits to his estate with numerous anecdotes of his master and Mr. Pitt; but he always prefaced them with something in the style of Cardinal Wolsey's *Ego et rex meus*, with "Me and Pitt, and Pitfour," went somewhere, or performed some exploit. The famous Duchess of Gordon once wrote a note to John (the name of this eccentric valet), and said, "John, put Pitfour into the carriage on Tuesday, and bring him up to Gordon Castle to dinner." After sufficiently scratching his head, and considering what he should do, he showed the letter to Pitfour, who smiled, and said dryly, "Well, John, I suppose we must go."

An old domestic of this class gave a capital reason to his *young* master for his being allowed to do as he liked:—"Ye needna find faut wi' me, Maister Jeems, *I hae been langer about the place than yersel.*"

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

ON HUMOUR PROCEEDING FROM SCOTTISH LANGUAGE, INCLUDING SCOTTISH PROVERBS

We come next to reminiscences chiefly connected with peculiarities which turned upon our Scottish Language, whether contained in words or in expressions. I am quite aware that the difference between the anecdotes belonging to this division and to the division termed "Wit and Humour" is very indistinct, and must, in fact, in many cases, be quite arbitrary. Much of what we enjoy most in Scottish stories is not on account of wit or humour, properly so called, in the speaker, but, I should say, rather from the odd and unexpected view which is taken of some matter, or from the quaint and original turn of the expression made use of, or from the simple and matter-of-fact reference made to circumstances which are unusual. I shall not, therefore, be careful to preserve any strict line of separation between this division and the next. Each is conversant with what is amusing and with what is Scotch. What we have now chiefly to illustrate by suitable anecdotes is peculiarities of Scottish language—its various humorous turns and odd expressions.

We have now to consider stories where words and expressions which are peculiarly Scotch impart the humour and the point. Sometimes they are altogether untranslatable into another language. As for example, a parishioner in an Ayrshire village meeting his pastor, who had just returned after a considerable absence on account of ill health, congratulated him on his

convalescence, and added, anticipatory of the pleasure he would have in hearing him again, "I'm unco yuckie to hear a blaud o' your gab." This is an untranslatable form of saying how glad he should be to hear his minister's voice again speaking to him the words of salvation and of peace from the pulpit.

The two following are good examples of that Scottish style of expression which has its own character. They are kindly sent by Sir Archibald Dunbar. The first illustrates Scottish acute discernment. A certain titled lady well known around her country town for her long-continued and extensive charities, which are not withheld from those who least deserve them, had a few years since, by the unexpected death of her brother and of his only son, become possessor of a fine estate. The news soon spread in the neighbourhood, and a group of old women were overheard in the street of Elgin discussing the fact. One of them said, "Ay, she may prosper, for she has baith the prayers of the good and of the bad."

The second anecdote is a delightful illustration of Mrs. Hamilton's *Cottagers of Glenburnie*, and of the old-fashioned Scottish pride in the *midden*. About twenty years ago, under the apprehension of cholera, committees of the most influential inhabitants of the county of Moray were formed to enforce a more complete cleansing of its towns and villages, and to induce the cottagers to remove their dunghills or dung-pits from too close a proximity to their doors or windows. One determined woman, on the outskirts of the town of Forres, no doubt with her future potato crop in view, met the M.P., who headed one of these committees, thus, "Noo, Major, you may tak our lives, but ye'll no tak our middens."

The change of language which has taken place in Scotland during the last seventy years has been a very important change, and must affect in a greater degree

than many persons would imagine, the turn of thought and general modes and aspects of society. In losing the old racy Scottish tongue no doubt much originality of *character* was lost. I suppose at one time the two countries of England and Scotland were considered as almost speaking different languages, and I suppose also, that from the period of the union of the crowns the language has been assimilating. We see the process of assimilation going on, and ere long amongst persons of education and birth very little difference will be perceptible. With regard to that class a great change has taken place in my time. I recollect old Scottish ladies and gentlemen who really *spoke Scotch.* It was not, mark me, speaking English with an accent. No; it was downright Scotch. Every tone and every syllable was Scotch. For example, I recollect old Miss Erskine of Dun, a fine specimen of a real lady, and daughter of an ancient Scottish house so speaking. Many people now would not understand her. She was always *the lady*, notwithstanding her dialect, and to none could the epithet vulgar be less appropriately applied. I speak of nearly forty years ago, and yet I recollect her accost to me as well as if it were yesterday, "I didna ken ye were i' the toun." Taking words and accent together, an address how totally unlike what we now meet with in society. Some of the old Scottish words which we can remember are delicious; but how strange they would sound to the ears of the present generation! Fancy that in walking from church, and discussing the sermon, a lady of rank should now express her opinion of it by the description of its being, "but a hummelcorn discourse." Many living persons can remember Angus old ladies who would say to their nieces and daughters, "Whatna hummeldoddie o' a mutch hae ye gotten?" meaning a flat and low-crowned cap. In speaking of the dryness of the soil on a road in Lanarkshire, a farmer said, "It

stoors[1] in an oor."[2] How would this be as tersely translated into English? The late Duchess of Gordon sat at dinner next an English gentleman who was carving, and who made it a boast that he was thoroughly master of the Scottish language. Her Grace turned to him and said, "Rax me a spaul o' that bubbly jock."[3] The unfortunate man was completely *nonplussed*. A Scottish gentleman was entertaining at his house an English cousin who professed himself as rather knowing in the language of the north side of the Tweed. He asked him what he supposed to be the meaning of the expression, "ripin' the ribs."[4] To which he readily answered, "Oh, it describes a very fat man." I profess myself an out and out Scotchman. I have strong national partialities—call them if you will national prejudices. I cherish a great love of old Scottish language. Some of our pure Scottish ballad poetry is unsurpassed in any language for grace and pathos. How expressive, how beautiful are its phrases! You can't translate them. Take an example of power in a Scottish expression, to describe with tenderness and feeling what is in human life. Take one of our most familiar phrases; as thus, —we meet an old friend, we talk over bygone days, and remember many who were dear to us both, once bright and young and gay, of whom some remain, honoured prosperous, and happy—of whom some are under a cloud of misfortune, or disgrace—some are broken in health and spirits—some sunk into the grave; we recall old familiar places—old companions, pleasures, and pursuits; as Scotchmen our hearts are touched with these remembrances of

AULD LANG SYNE.

[1] Stoor is, Scotticé, *dust in motion*, and there is really no synonym for it in English.
[2] Hour.
[3] Reach me a leg of that turkey.
[4] Clearing ashes out of the bars of the grate.

Match me the phrase in English. You can't translate it. The fitness and the beauty lie in the felicity of the language. Like many happy expressions, it is not transferable into another tongue, just like the "simplex munditiis" of Horace, which describes the natural grace of female elegance, or the ἀνηριθμον γελασμα of Æschylus, which describes the bright sparkling of the ocean in the sun.

I think the power of Scottish dialect was happily exemplified by the late Dr. Adam, rector of the High School of Edinburgh, in his translation of the Horatian expression, "desipere in loco," which he turned by the Scotch phrase "Weel-timed daffin'," a translation, however, which no one but a Scotchman could appreciate. The following humorous Scottish translation of an old Latin aphorism has been assigned to the late Dr. Hill of St. Andrews, "*Qui bene cepit dimidium facti fecit.*" The witty Principal expressed in Scotch, "Weel saipet (well soaped) is half shaven."

What mere *English* word could have expressed a distinction so well in such a case as the following? I heard once a lady in Edinburgh objecting to a preacher that she did not understand him. Another lady, his great admirer, insinuated that probably he was too "deep" for her to follow. But her ready answer was, "Na, na, he's no just deep, but he's *drumly*.[1]

We have just received a testimony to the value of our Scottish language from the illustrious Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, the force and authority of which no one will be disposed to question. Lord Brougham, in speaking of improvements upon the English language, makes these striking remarks:—

"The pure and classical language of Scotland must on no account be regarded as a provincial dialect, any more than French was so regarded in the reign of

[1] Mentally confused. Muddy when applied to water.

Henry V., or Italian in that of the first Napoleon, or Greek under the Roman Empire. Nor is it to be in any manner of way considered as a corruption of the Saxon; on the contrary, it contains much of the old and genuine Saxon, with an intermixture from the Northern nations, as Danes and Norse, and some, though a small portion, from the Celtic. But in whatever way composed, or from whatever sources arising, it is a national language, used by the whole people in their early years, by many learned and gifted persons throughout life, and in which are written the laws of the Scotch, their judicial proceedings, their ancient history, above all, their poetry.

"There can be no doubt that the English language would greatly gain by being enriched with a number both of words and of phrases, or turns of expression, now peculiar to the Scotch. It was by such a process that the Greek became the first of tongues, as well written as spoken. . . .

"Would it not afford means of enriching and improving the English language, if full and accurate glossaries of improved Scotch words and phrases—those successfully used by the best writers, both in prose and verse—were given, with distinct explanation and reference to authorities? This has been done in France and other countries, where some dictionaries accompany the English, in some cases with Scotch synonyms, in others with varieties of expression."—*Installation Address*, p. 63.

The Scotch as a people, from their more guarded and composed method of speaking, are not so liable to fall into that figure of speech for which our Irish neighbours are celebrated—usually called the Bull; some specimens, however, of that confusion of thought, very like a Bull, have been recorded of Scottish interlocutors.

Of this the two following examples have been sent to me by a kind friend.

It is related of a Scottish judge, Lord Polkemet (who

has supplied several anecdotes of Scottish stories), that on going to consult a dentist, who, as is usual, placed him in the professional chair, and told his lordship that he must let him put his fingers into his mouth, "Na, but ye'll aiblins *bite me.*"

A Scottish laird, singularly enough the grandson of the learned judge mentioned above, when going his round to canvass for the country, at the time when the electors were chiefly confined to resident proprietors, was asked at one house where he called if he would not take some refreshment, hesitated, and said, "I doubt it's treating, and may be ca'd *bribery.*"

But a still more amusing specimen of this figure of speech was supplied by an honest Highlander, in the days of sedan chairs. For the benefit of my young readers I may describe the sedan chair as a comfortable little carriage fixed to two poles, and carried by two men, one behind and one before. A dowager lady of quality had gone out to dinner in one of these "leathern conveniences," and whilst she herself enjoyed the hospitality of the mansion upstairs, her bearers were profusely entertained downstairs, and partook of the abundant refreshment offered to them. When my lady was to return, and had taken her place in the sedan, her bearers raised the chair, but she found no progress was made—she felt herself sway first to one side, then to the other, and soon came bump upon the ground, when Donald behind was heard shouting to Donald before (for the bearers of sedans were always Highlanders), "Let her down, Donald man, *for she's drunk.*"

I cannot help thinking that a change of national language involves to some extent change of national character. Numerous examples of great power in Scottish phraseology, to express the picturesque, the feeling, the wise, and the humorous, might be taken from the works of Robert Burns, Ferguson, or Allan Ramsay, and which lose their

charm altogether when *unscottified*. The speaker certainly seems to take a strength and character from his words. We must now look for specimens of this racy and expressive tongue in the more retired parts of the country. It is no longer to be found in high places. It has disappeared from the social circles of our cities. In my early days the intercourse with the peasantry of Forfarshire, Kincardineshire, and especially of Deeside, was most amusing, not that the things said were so much out of the common, as that the language in which they were conveyed was picturesque, and odd, and taking. And certainly it does appear to me that as the language grows more uniform and conventional, less marked and peculiar in its dialect and expressions, so does the character of those who speak it become so. I have a rich sample of Mid-Lothian Scotch from a young friend in the country, who describes the conversation of an old woman on the property as amusing her by such specimens of genuine Scottish raciness and humour. On one occasion, for instance, the young lady had told her humble friend that she was going to Ireland, and would have to undergo a sea voyage. "Weel, noo, ye dinna mean that! Ance I thocht to gang across to tither side o' the Queensferry wi' some ither folks to a fair, ye ken; but juist when e'er I pat my fit in the boat, the boat gie wallop, and my heart gie a loup, and I thocht I'd gang oot o' my judgment athegither, so says I, Na, na, ye gang awa by yoursells to tither side, and I'll bide here till sic times as ye came awa back." When we hear our Scottish language at home, and spoken by our own countrymen, we are not so much struck with any remarkable effects; but it takes a far more impressive character when heard amongst those who speak a different tongue, and when encountered in other lands. I recollect the late Sir Robert Liston expressing this feeling in his own case. When our ambassador at Constantinople, some Scotchmen had been

recommended to him for some purpose of private or of government business; and Sir Robert was always ready to do a kind thing for a countryman. He found them out in a barber's shop waiting for being shaved in turn. One came in rather late, and seeing he had scarcely room at the end of the seat, addressed his countryman, "Neebour, wad ye sit a bit *wast*." What strong associations must have been called up, by hearing, in a distant land, such an expression in Scottish tones.

We may observe here, that marking the course any person is to take, or the direction in which any object is to be met with by the points of the compass, was a prevailing practice amongst the older Scottish race. There could hardly be a more ludicrous application of the test, than was furnished by an honest Highlander in describing the direction which his medicine would *not* take. Jean Cumming, of Altyre, who, in common with her three sisters, was a true *sœur de charité*, was one day taking her rounds as usual, visiting the poor sick, among whom there was a certain Donald MacQueen, who had been sometime confined to his bed. Miss Cumming, after asking him how he felt, and finding that he was "no better," of course inquired if he had taken the medicine which she had sent him; "Troth no, me lady," he replied. "But why not, Donald," she answered, "it was *very wrong*; how can you expect to get better if you do not help yourself with the remedies which Heaven provides for you." "*V*right or *V*rang," said Donald, "it wou'd na gang *wast* in spite o' me." In all the north country, it is always said, "I'm ganging east or west," etc., and it happened that Donald on his sick bed was lying east and west, his feet pointing to the latter direction, hence his reply to indicate that he could not swallow the medicine!

We may fancy the amusement of the officers of a regiment in the West Indies at the innocent remark

of a young lad who had just joined from Scotland. On meeting at dinner, his salutation to his colonel was, "Anither het day, Cornal," as if "het days" were in Barbadoes few and far between, as they were in his dear old stormy cloudy Scotland. Or take the case of a Scottish saying, which indicated at once the dialect and the economical habits of a hardy and struggling race. A young Scotchman, who had been some time in London, met his friend recently come up from the north to pursue his fortune in the great metropolis. On discussing matters connected with their new life in London, the more experienced visitor remarked upon the greater *expenses* there than in the retired Scottish town which they had left. "Ay," said the other, sighing over the reflection, "When ye get cheenge for a saxpence here, it's soon slippit awa'." I recollect a story of my father's which illustrates the force of dialect, although confined to the inflections of a single monosyllable. On riding home one evening, he passed a cottage or small farm-house, where there was a considerable assemblage of people, and an evident incipient merry-making for some festive occasion. On asking one of the lasses standing about what it was, she answered, "Ou, it's juist a wedding o' Jock Thamson and Janet Frazer." To the question, "Is the bride rich?" there was a plain quiet "Na." "Is she young?" a more emphatic and decided "Naa!" but to the query, "Is she bonny?" a most elaborate and prolonged shout of "Naaa!"

It has been said that the Scottish dialect is peculiarly powerful in its use of *vowels*, and the following dialogue between a shopman and a customer has been given as a specimen. The conversation relates to a plaid hanging at the shop door—

Cust. (inquiring the material), Oo? (wool?)

Shop. Ay, oo (yes, of wool).

Cust. A' oo? (all wool?)

Shop. Ay, a' oo (yes, all wool).

CUST. A' ae oo ? (all same wool ?)

SHOP. Ay, a' *ae* oo (yes, all same wool).

An amusing anecdote of a pithy and jocular reply, comprised in one syllable, is recorded of an eccentric legal Scottish functionary of the last century. An advocate, of whose professional qualifications he had formed rather a low estimate, was complaining to him of being passed over in a recent appointment to the bench, and expressed his sense of the injustice with which he had been treated. He was very indignant at his claims and merit being overlooked in their not choosing him for the new judge, adding with much acrimony, "And I can tell you they might have got a 'waur.'"[1] To which, as if merely coming over the complainant's language again, the answer was a grave "Whaur ?"[2] The merit of the impertinence was, that it sounded as if it were merely a repetition of his friend's last words, waur and whaur. It was as if "*echo* answered whaur ?" As I have said, the oddity and acuteness of the speaker arose from the manner of expression, not from the thing said. In fact, the same thing said in plain English would be mere commonplace. I recollect being much amused with a dialogue between my brother and his man, the chief manager of a farm which he had just taken, and, I suspect, in a good measure, manager of the *farmer* as well. At any rate he committed to this acute overseer all the practical details ; and on the present occasion had sent him to market to dispose of a cow and a pony, a simple enough transaction, and with a simple enough result. The cow was brought back, the pony was sold. But the man's description of it forms the point. "Well, John, have you sold the cow?" "Na, but I *grippit* a chiel for the powny!" The "*grippit*" was here most expressive! Indeed, this word has a significance hardly expressed by any English one, and used to be very prevalent to indicate keen and forcible

[1] Worse. [2] Where.

tenacity of possession ; thus a character noted for avarice or sharp looking to self-interest, was termed "grippy." In mechanical contrivances, anything taking a close adherence, was called having a gude *grip*. I recollect in boyish days when on Deeside taking wasp nests, an old man looking on was sharply stung by one, and his description was "Ane o' them's grippit me fine." The following had an indescribable piquancy, which arose from the *Scotticism* of the terms and the manners. Many years ago, when accompanying a shooting party on the Grampians, not with a gun like the rest, but with a botanical box for collecting specimens of mountain plants, the party had got very hot, and very tired, and very cross. On the way home, whilst sitting down to rest, a gamekeeper-sort of attendant, and a character in his way, said, "I wish I was in the dining-room of Fasque." An old laird very testily replied, "Ye'd soon be kickit out o' that ; " to which the other replied, not at all daunted, "Weel, weel, then I wadna be far frae the kitchen." A quaint and characteristic reply, I recollect from another farm-servant. My eldest brother had just been constructing a piece of machinery, which was driven by a stream of water running through the home farm-yard. There was a thrashing machine, a winnowing machine, and circular saw for splitting trees into paling, and other contrivances of a like kind. Observing an old man, who had long been about the place, looking very attentively at all that was going on, he said, "Wonderful things people can do now, Robby ? " "Ay," said Robby, "indeed, Sir Alexander, I'm thinking if Solomon was alive noo he'd be thocht naething o' ! "

The two following derive their force entirely from the Scottish turn of the expressions. Translated into English, they would lose all point—at least, much of the point which they now have :—

At the sale of an antiquarian gentleman's effects in

Roxburghshire, which Sir Walter Scott happened to attend, there was one little article, a Roman *patina*, which occasioned a good deal of competition, and was eventually knocked down to the distinguished baronet at a high price. Sir Walter was excessively amused during the time of bidding, to observe how much it excited the astonishment of an old woman, who had evidently come there to buy culinary utensils on a more economical principle. "If the parritch-pan," she at last burst out—"if the parritch-pan gangs at that, what will the kail-pat gang for?"

An ancestor of Sir Walter Scott joined the Pretender, and, with his brother, was engaged in that unfortunate adventure which ended in a skirmish and captivity at Preston, 1715. It was the fashion of those times for all persons of the rank of gentlemen to wear scarlet waistcoats. A ball had struck one of the brothers, and carried part of this dress into his body, and in this condition he was taken prisoner with a number of his companions, and stript, as was too often the practice in those remorseless wars. Thus wounded, and nearly naked, having only a shirt on, and an old sack, about them, the ancestor of the great Poet was sitting, along with his brother and a hundred and fifty unfortunate gentlemen, in a granary at Preston. The wounded man fell sick, as the story goes, and vomited the scarlet cloth which the ball had passed into the wound. "O man, Wattie," cried his brother, "If you have a wardrobe in your wame, I wish you would vomit me a pair o' breeks." But after all, it was amongst the old ladies that the great abundance of choice pungent Scottish expressions, such as you certainly do not meet with in these days, was to be sought. In their position of society, education either in England, or education conducted by English teachers, has so spread in Scottish families, and intercourse with the south has been so increased, that all these colloquial peculiarities are fast

disappearing. Some of the ladies of this older school felt some indignation at the change which they lived to see was fast going on. One of them being asked if an individual whom she had lately seen was "Scotch," answered with some bitterness, "I canna say; ye a' speak sae *genteel* now that I dinna ken wha's Scotch." It was not uncommon to find, in young persons, examples, some years ago, of an attachment to the Scottish dialect, like that of the old lady. In the life of P. Tytler, lately published, there is an account of his first return to Scotland from a school in England. His family were delighted with his appearance, manners, and general improvement; but a sister did not share this pleasure unmixed, for being found in tears, and the remark being made, "Is he not charming," her reply was, in great distress, "Oh yes, but he speaks English!"

The class of old Scottish ladies marked by so many peculiarities, generally lived in provincial towns, and never dreamt of going from home. Many had never been in London, or had even crossed the Tweed. But as Lord Cockburn's experience goes back further than mine, and as he had special opportunities of being acquainted with their characteristic peculiarities, I will quote his animated description at page 57 of his *Memorials*. "There was a singular race of old Scotch ladies. They were a delightful set—strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited—merry even in solitude; very resolute; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit, were embodied in curious outsides, for they all dressed, and spoke, and did exactly as they chose. Their language, like their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for."[1]

[1] Lord Cockburn's *Memorials*, p. 58.

This is a masterly description of a race now all but passed away. I have known several of them in my early days; and amongst them we must look for the racy Scottish peculiarities of diction and of expression which, with them, are also nearly gone. Lord Cockburn has given some illustrations of these peculiarities; and I have heard others, especially connected with Jacobite partialities, of which I say nothing, as they are in fact rather *strong* for such an occasion as the present. One, however, I heard lately as coming from a Forfarshire old lady of this class, which bears upon the point of "resolute" determination referred to in Lord Cockburn's description. She had been very positive in the disclaiming of some assertion which had been attributed to her, and on being asked if she had not written it, or something very like it, she replied, "Na, na; I never *write* onything of consequence—I may deny what I say, but I canna deny what I write."

Mrs. Baird of Newbyth, the mother of our distinguished countryman the late General Sir David Baird, was always spoken of as a grand specimen of the class. When the news arrived from India of the gallant but unfortunate action of '84 again Hyder Ali, in which her son, then Captain Baird, was engaged, it was stated that he and other officers had been taken prisoners and chained together two and two. The friends were careful in breaking such sad intelligence to the mother of Captain Baird. When, however, she was made fully to understand the position of her son and his gallant companions, disdaining all weak and useless expressions of her own grief, and knowing well the restless and athletic habits of her son, all she said was, "Lord pity the chiel that's chained to our Davy."[1]

The ladies of this class had certainly no affectation

[1] It is but due to the memory of "our Davy" to state that "the chiel" to whom he was chained, in writing home to his friends, bore high testimony to the kindness and consideration with which he was treated by Captain Baird.

in speaking of those who came under their displeasure, even when life and death were concerned. I had an anecdote illustrative of this characteristic, in a well-known old lady of the last century, Miss Johnstone of Westerhall. She had been extremely indignant that, on the death of her brother, his widow had proposed to sell off the old furniture of Westerhall. She was attached to it from old associations, and considered the parting with it little short of sacrilege. The event was, however, arrested by death, or, as she describes the result, "the furniture was a' to be roupit, and we couldna persuade her. But before the sale cam on, in God's gude providence, she just clinkit aff hersell." Of this same Miss Johnstone, another characteristic anecdote has been preserved in the family. She came into possession of Hawkhill, near Edinburgh, and died there. When dying, a tremendous storm of rain and thunder came on, so as to shake the house. In her own quaint eccentric spirit, and with no thought of profane or light allusions, she looked up, and, listening to the storm, quietly remarked in reference to her departure, "Ech, sirs! what a night for me to be fleeing thro' the air!" Of fine acute sarcasm I recollect hearing an expression from rather a *modern* sample of the class, a charming character, but only to a certain degree answering to the description of the *older* generation. Conversation turning, and with just indignation, on the infidel remarks which had been heard from a certain individual, and on his irreverent treatment of Holy Scripture, all that this lady condescended to say of him was, "Gey impudent of him, I think."

A recorded reply of old Lady Perth to a French gentleman is quaint and characteristic. They had been discussing the respective merits of the cookery of each country. The Frenchman offended the old Scottish peeress by some disparaging remarks on Scottish dishes, and by highly preferring those of France. All she would

answer, was "Weel, weel, some fowk like parritch, and some like paddocks."[1]

Of this older race—the ladies who were aged fifty years ago—the description is given by Lord Cockburn in strong and bold outline. I would pretend to nothing more than giving a few illustrative details from my own experience, which may assist the description by adding some practical realities to the picture. Several of them whom I knew in my early days certainly answered to many of those descriptions of Lord Cockburn. Their language and expressions had a zest and peculiarity which is gone, and which would not, I fear, do for modern life and times.

I have spoken of Miss Erskine of Dun, which is near Montrose. She, however, resided in Edinburgh. But those I knew best had lived many years in the then retired society of a country town. Some were my own relations; and in boyish days (for they had not generally much patience with boys) were looked up to with considerable awe as very formidable personages. Their characters and modes of expression, in many respects, remarkably corresponded with Lord Cockburn's description. There was a dry Scottish humour which we fear their successors do not inherit. One of these Montrose ladies had many anecdotes told of her quaint ways and sayings. Walking in the street one day, slippery from frost, she fairly fell down. A young officer with much politeness came forward and picked her up, earnestly asking her at the same time, "I hope, ma'am, you are no worse?" to which she replied, looking at him very steadily, "Indeed, sir, I'm just as little the better." A few days after, she met her military supporter in a shop. He was a fine tall youth, upwards of six feet high, and by way of making some grateful recognition for his late polite attention, she eyed him from head to foot; and as she was of the opinion of the old Scotch lady, who declared she "aye liked bonny

[1] Frogs.

fowk," she viewed her young friend with much satisfaction, but which she only evinced by the dry remark, "O'd, ye're a lang lad; God gie ye grace."

I had from a relative or intimate friend of two sisters of this school, well known about Glasgow, an odd account of what it seems from their own statement had passed between them at a country house, where they had attended a sale by auction. As the business of the day went on, a dozen of silver spoons had to be disposed of; and before they were put up for competition, they were, according to the usual custom, handed round for inspection to the company. When returned into the hands of the auctioneer he found only eleven. In great wrath, he ordered the door to be shut, that no one might escape, and insisted on every one present being searched, to discover the delinquent. One of the sisters, in consternation, whispered to the other, "Esther, ye hae nae gotten the spune?" to which she replied, "Na; but I hae gotten Mrs. Siddons in my pocket." She had been struck by a miniature of the great actress, and quietly had pocketed it. The cautious reply of the sister was, "Then juist drop her, Esther." One of the sisterhood, a connection of my own, had much of this dry Scottish humour. She had a lodging in the house of a respectable grocer; and on her niece most innocently asking her, "if she was not very fond of her landlord," in reference to the excellence of her apartments and the attention he paid to her comfort, she demurred to the question on the score of its propriety, by replying, "Fond of my landlord! that would be an *unaccountable* fondness."

An amusing account was given of an interview and conversation between this lady and the provost of Montrose. She had demurred at paying some municipal tax with which she had been charged, and the provost was anxious to prevent her getting into difficulty on the subject, and kindly called to convince her of the fairness

of the claim, and the necessity of paying it. In his explanation he referred back to his own bachelor days when a similar payment had been required from him. "I assure you, ma'am," he said, "when I was in your situation I was called upon in a similar way for this tax;" to which she replied, in quiet scorn, "In my situation! an' whan were ye in my situation—an auld maid leevin' in a flat wi' an ae lass?" But the complaints of such imposts were urged in a very humorous manner by another Montrose old lady, Miss Helen Carnegy of Craigo; she hated paying taxes, and always pretended to misunderstand their nature. One day, receiving a notice of such payment signed by the provost (Thom), she broke out: "I dinna understand thae taxes; but I just think when Mrs. Thom wants a new gown, the provost sends me a tax paper!" The good lady's naïve rejection of the idea that she could be in any sense "fond of her landlord," already referred to, was somewhat in unison with a similar feeling recorded to have been expressed by the late Mr. Wilson, the celebrated Scottish vocalist. He was taking lessons from the late Mr. Finlay Dun, one of the most accomplished musicians of his day. Mr. Dun had just returned from Italy, and, impressed with admiration of the deep pathos, sentiment, and passion of the Italian school of music, he regretted to find in his pupil so lovely a voice and so much talent losing much of its effect for want of feeling. Anxious, therefore, to throw into his friend's performance something of the Italian expression, he proposed to bring it out by this suggestion: "Now, Mr. Wilson, just suppose that I am your lady love, and sing to me as you could imagine yourself doing were you desirous of impressing her with your earnestness and affection." Poor Mr. Wilson hesitated, blushed, and under doubt how far such a personification even in his case was allowable, at last remonstrated, "Aye, Mr. Dun, ye forget I'm a married man!"

A case has been reported of a country girl, however, who thought it possible there might be an excess in such scrupulous regard to appearances. On her marriage-day, the youth to whom she was about to be united said to her in a triumphant tone, "Weel, Jenny, haven't I been unco ceevil," alluding to the fact that during their whole courtship he had never even given her a kiss. Her quiet reply was, "Ou, ay, man; senselessly ceevil."

One of these Montrose ladies and a sister lived together; and in a very quiet way they were in the habit of giving little dinner-parties, to which occasionally they invited their gentlemen friends. However, gentlemen were not always to be had; and on one occasion, when such a difficulty had occurred, they were talking over the matter with a friend. The one lady seemed to consider such an acquisition almost essential to the having a dinner at all. The other, who did not see the same necessity, quietly adding, "But, indeed, oor Jean think's a man a perfect salvation."

Very much of the same class of remarks was the following sly remark of one of the sisterhood. At a well-known tea-table in a country town of Forfarshire, the events of the day, grave and gay, had been fully discussed by the assembled sisterhood. The occasion was improved by an elderly spinster, as follows:—"Weel, weel, sirs, these are solemn events—death and marriage—but ye ken there what we must all come till." "Eh! Miss Jeany, ye have been lang spared," was the arch reply of a younger member.

There was occasionally a pawky semi-sarcastic humour in the replies of some of the ladies we speak of that was quite irresistible, of which I have from a friend a good illustration in an anecdote well known at the time. A late well-known member of the Scottish bar, when a youth, was somewhat of a dandy, and, I suppose, somewhat short and sharp in his temper. He was going to pay a

visit in the country, and was making a great fuss about his preparing and putting up his habiliments. His old aunt was much annoyed at all this bustle, and stopped him by the somewhat contemptuous question, "Whar's this you're gaun, Robby, that ye mak sic a grand wark about yer claes?" The young man lost temper, and pettishly replied, "I'm going to the devil." "'Deed, Robby, then," was the quiet answer, "ye needna be sae nice, he'll juist tak ye as ye are."

Ladies of this class had a quiet mode of expressing themselves on very serious subjects, which indicated their quaint power of description, rather than their want of feeling. Thus, of two sisters, when one had died, it was supposed that she had injured herself by an imprudent indulgence in strawberries and cream, of which she had partaken in the country. A friend was condoling with the surviving sister, and, expressing her sorrow, had added, "I had hoped your sister was to live many years." To which her relative rejoined—"Leeve! hoo could she leeve! she juist felled[1] hersell at Craigo wi' strawberries and cream!" However, she spoke with the same degree of coolness of her own decease. For when her friend was comforting her in illness, by the hopes that she would, after winter, enjoy again some of their country spring butter, she exclaimed, without the slightest idea of being guilty of any irreverence, "Spring butter! by that time I shall be buttering in heaven." When really dying, and when friends were round her bed, she overheard one of them saying to another, "Her face has lost its colour; it grows like a sheet of paper." The quaint spirit even then broke out in the remark, "Then I'm sure it maun be *broon* paper." A very strong-minded lady of the class, and, in Lord Cockburn's language, "indifferent about modes and habits," had been asking from a lady the character of a cook she was about to hire. The lady naturally

[1] Killed.

entered a little upon her moral qualifications, and described her as a very decent woman ; the response to which was, " Oh, d—n her decency ; can she make good collops ? " —an answer which would somewhat surprise a lady of Moray Place now, if engaged in a similar discussion of a servant's merits.

The Rev. Dr. Cook of Haddington supplies an excellent anecdote, of which the point is in the dry Scottish answer : —An old lady of the Doctor's acquaintance, about seventy, sent for her medical attendant to consult him about a sore throat, which had troubled her for some days. Her medical man was ushered into her room, decked out with the now-prevailing fashion, a mustache and flowing beard. The old lady, after exchanging the usual civilities, described her complaint to the worthy son of Æsculapius. " Well," says he, " do you know, Mrs. Macfarlane, I used to be much troubled with the very same kind of sore throat, but ever since I allowed my mustache and beard to grow, I have never been troubled with it." " A-weel, a-weel," said the old lady drily, " that may be the case, but ye maun prescribe some other method for me to get quit o' the sair throat ; for ye ken, doctor, I canna adopt *that* cure."

But how exquisite the answer of old Mrs. Robison, widow of the eminent professor of natural philosophy, and who had a morbid dislike to everything which she thought savoured of *cant*. She had invited a gentleman to dinner on a particular day, and he had accepted, with the reservation, " If I am spared "—" Weel, weel," said Mrs. Robison, " if ye're dead, I'll no expect ye."

I had two grand-aunts living at Montrose at that time—two Miss Ramsays of Balmain. They were somewhat of the severe class—Nelly especially, who was an object rather of awe than of affection. She certainly had a very awful appearance to young apprehensions, from the strangeness of her head gear. Ladies of this class Lord

Cockburn has spoken of as "having their peculiarities embodied in curious outsides, as they dressed, spoke, and did exactly as they chose." As a sample of such curious outside and dress, my good aunt used to go about the house with an immense pillow strapped over her head —warm but formidable. These two maiden grand-aunts had invited their niece to pay them a visit, an aunt of mine, who had made what they considered a very imprudent marriage, and where considerable poverty was likely to accompany the step she had taken. The poor niece had to bear many a slap directed to her improvident union, as for example: One day she had asked for a piece of tape for some work she had in hand as a young wife expecting to become a mother. Miss Nelly said with much point, "Ay, Kitty, ye shall get a bit knittin' (*i.e.*, a bit of tape). We hae a'thing; we're no married." It was the lady who, by an inadvertent use of a term, shewed what was passing in her mind in a way which must have been quite transparent to the bystanders. At a supper which she was giving, she was evidently much annoyed at the reckless and clumsy manner in which a gentleman was operating upon a ham which was at table, cutting out great lumps, and distributing them to the company. The lady said in a very querulous tone, "Oh, Mr. *Divet*, will you help Mrs. So and So?—divet being a provincial term for a turf or sod cut out of the green, and the resemblance of it to the pieces carved out by the gentleman evidently having taken possession of her imagination. Mrs. Helen Carnegy of Craigo was a thorough specimen of this class of old Scottish ladies. She lived in Montrose, and died in 1818, at the advanced age of 91. She was a Jacobite, and very aristocratic in her feelings, but on social terms with many burghers of Montrose, or Munross, as it was called. She preserved a very nice distinction of addresses, suited to different individuals in the town, according as she placed them in the scale of her

consideration. She liked a party at quadrille, and sent out her servant every morning to invite the ladies required to make up the game, and her directions were graduated thus—"Nelly, ye'll ging to Lady Carnegy's and mak my compliments, and ask the *honour* of her ladyship's company, and that of the Miss Carnegies, to tea this evening; and if they canna come, ging to the Miss Mudies, and ask the *pleasure* of their company; and if they canna come, ye may ging to Miss Hunter and ask the *favour* of her company; and if she canna come, ging to Lucky Spark and *bid her come.*"

A great confusion existed in the minds of some of those old-fashioned ladies on the subject of modern inventions and usages. A Montrose old lady protested against the use of steam vessels, as counteracting the decrees of Providence in going against wind and tide, vehemently asserting, "I would *hae* naething to say to thae impious vessels." Another lady was equally discomposed by the introduction of gas, asking with much earnestness, "What's to become o' the puir whales?" deeming their interests materially affected by this superseding of their oil. A lady of this class, who had long lived in country retirement, coming up to Edinburgh, was, after an absence of many years, going along Princes Street about the time when the water-carts were introduced for preventing the dust, and seeing one of them passing, rushed from off the pavement to the driver, saying, "Man, ye're *skailing* a' the water." Such being her ignorance of modern improvements.

There is a point and originality in the expressions on common matters of the old Scottish ladies, unlike what one finds now; for example, a country minister had been invited, with his wife, to dine and spend the night at the house of one of his lairds. Their host was very proud of one of the very large beds which had just come into fashion, and in the morning asked the lady how she had

slept in it. "O vary well, sir; but, indeed, I thought I'd lost the minister a' thegither."

Nothing, however, in my opinion comes up to the originality and point of the Montrose old maiden lady's most "exquisite reason" for not subscribing to the proposed fund for organizing a volunteer corps in that town. It was at the time of expected invasion at the beginning of the century, and some of the town magistrates called upon her and solicited her subscription to raise men for the service of the king—"Indeed," she answered right sturdily, "I'll doe nae sic thing; I ne'er could raise a man *for mysel*, and I'm no gan to raise men for King George."

Some curious stories are told of ladies of this class, as connected with the novelties and excitement of railway travelling. Missing their luggage, or finding that something has gone wrong about it, often causes very terrible distress, and might be amusing, were it not to the sufferer so severe a calamity. I was much entertained with the earnestness of this feeling, and the expression of it from an old Scotch lady, whose box was not forthcoming at the station where she was to stop. When urged to be patient, her indignant exclamation was, "I can bear ony pairtings that may be ca'ed for in God's Providence; but I canna stan' pairting frae ma claes."

The following anecdote from the west exhibits a curious confusion of ideas arising from the old-fashioned prejudice against Frenchmen and their language, which existed in the last generation. During the long French war, two old ladies in Stranraer were going to the kirk, the one said to the other, "Was it no a wonderfu' thing that the Breetish were aye victorious ower the French in battle." "Not a bit," said the other old lady, "dinna ye ken the Breetish aye say their prayers before ga'in into battle." The other replied, "But canna the French say their prayers as weel." The reply was most characteristic,

"Hoot! jabbering bodies, wha could *understan'* them."

Some of these ladies, as belonging to the old country families, had very high notions of their own importance, and a great idea of their difference from the burgher families of the town. I am assured of the truth of the following naïve specimen of such family pride:—One of the olden maiden ladies of Montrose called one day on some ladies of one of the families in the neighbourhood, and on being questioned as to the news of the town said, "News! oh! Baillie ——'s eldest son is to be married." "And pray," was the reply, "and pray, Miss ——, an' fa' ever heard o' a merchant i' the toon o' Montrose *ha'in'* an *eldest son?*" The good lady thought that any privilege of primogeniture belonged only to the family of *laird.*

At the beginning of this century, when the fear of invasion was rife, it was proposed to mount a small battery at the water-mouth by subscription, and Miss Carnegy was waited on by a deputation from the town-council. One of them having addressed her on the subject, she heard him with some impatience, and when he had finished, she said, "Are ye ane o' the toon council?" He replied, "I have that honour, ma'm." To which she rejoined, "Ye may hae that *profit*, but honour ye hae nane;" and then to the point, she added, "But I've been tell't that ae day's wark o' twa or three men wad mount the cannon, and that it may be a' dune for twenty shillings, now there's twa punds to ye." The councillor pocketed the money and withdrew. On one occasion, as she sat in an easy chair, having assumed the habits and privileges of age, Mr. Mollison, the minister of the Established Kirk, called on her to solicit for some charity. She did not like being asked for money, and, from her Jacobite principles, she certainly did not respect the Presbyterian Kirk. When he came in, she made an

inclination of the head, and he said, "Don't get up, madam." She replied, "Get up! I wadna rise out of my chair for King George himself, let abee a Whig minister."

This was plain speaking enough, but there is something quite inimitable in the matter-of-factness of the following story of an advertisement, which may tend to illustrate the Antiquary's remark to Mrs. Mail, anent the starting of the coach or fly to Queensferry. A carrier, who plied his trade between Aberdeen and a village considerably to the north of it, was asked by one of the villagers, "Fan are ye gaun to the town" (Aberdeen)? To which he replied, "I'll be in on Monanday, God willin' an' weather permittin', an' on Tiseday, *fither or no*."

It is a curious subject the various shades of Scottish dialect and Scottish expressions, commonly called Scotticisms. We mark in the course of fifty years how some disappear altogether; others become more and more rare, and of all of them we may say, I think, that the specimens of them are to be looked for every year more in the descending classes of society. What was common amongst peers, judges, lairds, advocates, and people of family and education, is now found in humbler ranks of life. There are few persons perhaps who have been born in Scotland, and who have lived long in Scotland, whom a nice southern ear might not detect as from the north. But far beyond such nicer shades of distinction, there are strong and characteristic marks of a Caledonian origin with which some of us have had practical acquaintance. I possess two curious, and now, I believe, rather scarce, publications on the prevalent Scotticisms of our speaking and writing. One is entitled *Scotticisms designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing*, by Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen. The other is to the same purpose, and is entitled, *Observations on the Scottish Dialect*, by the late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair. Expressions which

were common in their days, and used by persons of all ranks, are not known by the rising generation. Many amusing equivoques used to be current, arising from Scotch people in England applying terms and expressions in a manner rather surprising to Southern ears. Thus, the story was told of a public character dear to the memory of Scotland, Henry Dundas (Viscount Melville), applying to Mr. Pitt for the loan of a horse "*the length* of Highgate," a very common expression in Scotland at that time, to signify the distance to which the ride was to extend. Mr. Pitt good humouredly wrote back to say that he was afraid he had not a horse in his possession quite so long as Mr. Dundas had mentioned, but he had sent the longest he had. There is a well-known case of mystification, caused to English ears by the use of Scottish terms, which took place in the House of Peers during the examination of the Magistrates of Edinburgh touching the particulars of the Porteous Mob in 1736. The Duke of Newcastle having asked the Provost with what kind of shot the town-guard, commanded by Porteous, had loaded their muskets, received the unexpected reply, "Ou, juist sic as ane shutes dukes and sic' like fules wi'." The answer was considered as a contempt of the House of Lords, and the poor Provost would have suffered from misconception of his patois, had not the Duke of Argyle (who must have been exceedingly amused) explained that the worthy chief magistrate's expression, when rendered into English, meant to describe the shot used for *ducks and water-fowl.* The circumstance is referred to by Sir W. Scott in the notes to the *Heart of Mid-Lothian.* A similar equivoque upon the double meaning of "Deuk" in Scottish language supplied material for a poor woman's honest compliment to a benevolent Scottish nobleman. John Duke of Roxburghe was one day out riding, and at the gate of Floors he was accosted by an importunate old beggar woman. He gave her half-a-crown, which pleased

her so much that she exclaimed, "Weel's me on your *guse* face, for Deuk's our little to ca' ye."

A very curious list may be made of words used in Scotland in a sense which would be quite unintelligible to southerns. Such applications are going out, but I remember them well amongst the old-fashioned people of Angus and the Mearns quite common in conversation. I subjoin some specimens :—

Bestial signifies amongst Scottish agriculturists cattle generally, the whole aggregate number of beasts on the farm. Again, a Scottish farmer when he speaks of his "hogs," or of buying "hogs," has no reference to swine, but means young sheep, *i.e.*, sheep before they have lost their first fleece.

Discreet does not bear the meaning of prudent or cautious, but of civil, kind, attentive. Such application of the word is said to have been made by Dr. Chalmers to the Bishop of Exeter. Those two eminent individuals had met for the first time at the hospitable house of the late Mr. Murray, the publisher. On the introduction taking place, the bishop expressed himself so warmly as to the pleasure it gave him to meet so distinguished and excellent a man as Dr. Chalmers, that the Doctor was quite overcome, and in a deprecating tone, said, "Oh, I am sure your lordship is very 'discreet.'"

Enterteening has in older Scottish usage the sense not of amusing, but of interesting. I remember an honest Dandie Dinmont on a visit to Bath. A lady, who had taken a kind charge of him, accompanied him to the theatre, and in the most thrilling scene of Kemble's acting, what is usually termed the dagger scene in Macbeth, she turned to the farmer with a whisper, "Is not that fine ?" to which the confidential reply was, "Oh, mem, it's vera *enterteening !*" Enterteening expressing his idea of the *interesting !*

Pig, in old-fashioned Scotch, was always used for

a coarse earthenware jar or vessel. In the life of the late Patrick Tytler, the amiable and gifted historian of Scotland, there occurs an amusing exemplification of the utter confusion of ideas caused by the use of Scottish phraseology. The family, when they went to London, had taken with them an old Scottish servant who had no notion of any terms beside her own. She came in one day greatly disturbed at the extremely backward state of knowledge of domestic affairs amongst the Londoners. She had been to so many shops and could not get "a great broon pig[1] to haud the butter in."

From a relative of the family I have received an account of a still worse confusion of ideas caused by the inquiry of a Mrs. Chisholm of Chisholm, who died in London in 1825, at an advanced age. She had come from the country to be with her daughter, and was a genuine Scottish lady of the old school. She wished to purchase a table-cloth of a check pattern like the squares of a chess or draft-board. Now a draft-board used to be called (as I remember) by old Scotch people a "dam[2]-brod."[3] Accordingly, Mrs. Chisholm entered the shop of a linen-draper, and asked to be shewn table-linen a *dam-brod* pattern. The shopman, although taken aback by a request, as he considered it, so strongly worded, by a respectable old lady, brought down what he assured her was the largest and widest made. No; that would not do. She repeated her wish for a dam-brod pattern, and left the shop surprised at the stupidity of the London shopman not having the pattern she asked for.

Silly has in genuine old Scottish use reference to weakness of body only, and not of mind. Before knowing the use of the word, I remember being much astonished at a farmer of the Mearns telling me of the strongest minded man in the country than he was "growing uncommon silly,"

[1] Earthenware vessel.
[2] *Dam*, the game of drafts. [3] *Brod*, the board.

not insinuating any decline of mental vigour, but only meaning that his bodily strength was giving way.

Frail, in like manner, expresses infirmity of body, and implies no charge of any laxity in moral principle; yet I have seen English persons looking with considerable consternation when an old-fashioned Scottish lady, speaking of a young and graceful female, lamented her being so *frail*.

Fail is another instance of different use of words. In Scotland it used to be quite common to say of a person whose health and strength had declined, that he had *failed*. To say this of a person connected with mercantile business has a very serious effect upon Southern ears, as implying only bankruptcy and ruin. I recollect many years ago at Monmouth, a Scottish lady creating much consternation in the mind of the mayor, by saying of a worthy man, the principal banker in the town, whom they both concurred in praising, that she was "sorry to find he was *failing*."

Honest has in Scotch a peculiar application, irrespective of any integrity of moral character. It is a kindly mode of referring to an individual, as we would say to a stranger, "Honest man, would you tell me the way to ——," or as Lord Hermand, when about to sentence a woman for stealing, began, remonstratively, "Honest woman, what garr'd ye steal your neighbour's tub?"

Superstitious: A correspondent informs me that in some parts of Mid-Lothian, the people constantly use the word "superstitious" for "bigoted;" thus, speaking of a very keen Free Church person, they will say, "he is awfu' supperstitious."

Kail in England simply expresses cabbage, but in Scotland represents the chief meal of the day. Hence the old-fashioned easy way of asking a friend to dinner was to ask him if he would take his kail with the family. In the same usage of the word, the Scottish proverb

expresses distress and trouble in a person's affairs, by saying that "he has got his kail through the reek." In like manner haddock, in Kincardineshire and Aberdeenshire, used to express the same idea, as the expression is, "Will ye tak your haddock wi' us the day?" that fish being so plentiful and so excellent that it was a standing dish. There is this difference, however, in the local usage, that to say in Aberdeen, Will you take your haddock, implies an invitation to dinner, whilst in Montrose the same expression means an invitation to *supper*. Differences of pronunciation also caused great confusion and misunderstanding. Novels used to be pronounced n*o*vels; envy en*v*y; a cloak was a clock, to the surprise of an English lady, to whom the maid said, on leaving the house, "Mem, winna ye tak the *clock* wi' ye?"

The names of children's diseases were a remarkable item in the catalogue of Scottish words—thus, in 1755, Mrs. Betty Muirheid kept a boarding-school for young ladies in the Trongate of Glasgow, near the Tron steeple. A girl on her arrival was asked whether she had had smallpox. "Yes mem, I've had the sma'pox, the nirls,[1] the blabs,[2] the scaw,[3] the kinkhost[4] and the fever, the branks[5] and the worm."[6]

There is indeed a case of Scottish pronunciation which adds to the force and copiousness of our language, by discriminating four words, which according to English speaking, are undistinguishable in mere pronunciation. The words are—wright (a carpenter), to write (with a pen), right (the reverse of wrong), rite (a ceremony). The four are however distinguished in old-fashioned Scotch pronunciation, thus—1. He's a wiricht; 2. to wireete; 3. richt; 4. rite.

I can remember a peculiar Scottish phrase very commonly used, which now seems to have passed away.

[1] Measles. [2] Nettle-rash. [3] The itch.
[4] Whooping-cough. [5] Mumps. [6] Toothache.

I mean the expression "to let on," indicating the notice or observation of some thing, or of some person—For example, "I saw Mr. ——, at the meeting, but I never let on that I knew he was present." A form of expression which has been a great favourite in Scotland, in my recollection, has much gone out of practice—I mean the frequent use of diminutives, generally adopted either as terms of endearment or of contempt. Thus, it was very common to speak of a person whom you meant rather to undervalue, as a *mannie*, a *bodie*, a *bit bodie*, or a *wee bit mannie*. The Bailie in *Rob Roy*, when he intended to represent his party as persons of no importance, used the expression, "We are bits o' Glasgow bodies." In a popular child's song, we have the endearing expression, "My wee bit laddie." We have known the series of diminutives, as applied to the canine race, very rich in diminution. There is—1. A dog; 2. A doggie; 3. A bit doggie; 4. A wee bit doggie; and even 5. A wee bit doggikie. A correspondent has supplied me with a diminutive, which is of a more extravagant degree of attenuation than any I ever met with. It is this—"A peerie wee bit o' a manikinie." We used to hear such expressions as those, which would not now be reckoned genteel: "Come in and get your bit dinner;" "I hope you are now settled in your ain bit housie." In the Caldwell papers (page 39) we have an interesting case of a diminutive happily applied. It is recorded in the family that Mrs. Mure, on receiving from David Hume, on his deathbed, the copy of his history, which is still in the library of Caldwell, marked "From the Author," she thanked him very warmly, and added in her native dialect, which she and the historian spoke in great purity, "O David, that's a book ye may weel be proud o', but before ye dee ye should burn a' your wee bukies;" to which, raising himself, he replied with some vehemence, half offended half in joke—"What for should I burn a' my

wee bukies?" He was too weak for discussion. He shook her hand and bade her farewell.

An admirable Scotch expression I recollect from one of the Montrose ladies before referred to. Her niece was asking a great many questions on some point concerning which her aunt had been giving her information, and coming over and over the ground, demanding an explanation how this had happened, and why something else was so and so. The old lady lost her patience, and at last burst forth: "I winna be *back-speired* noo, Pally Fullerton." Back-speired! how much more pithy and expressive than cross-examined! Another capital expression to mark that a person has stated a point rather under than over the truth, is, "The less I lee," as in *Guy Mannering*, where the precentor exclaims to Mrs. MacCandlish, "Aweel, gudewife, then the less I lee." We have found it a very amusing task collecting together a number of these phrases, and forming them into a connected epistolary composition. We may imagine the sort of puzzle it would be to a young person of the present day—one of what we may call the new school. We will suppose an English young lady, or an English educated young lady, lately married, receiving such a letter as the following from the Scottish aunt of her husband. We may suppose it to be written by a very old lady, who, for the last fifty years, has not moved from home, and has changed nothing of her early days. I can safely affirm that every word of it I have either seen written in a letter, or have heard it in ordinary conversation:—

"*Montrose.*[1]

"My Dear Niece,—I am real glad to find my *nevy* has made so good a choice as to have secured you for his wife; and I am sure this step will add much to his comfort, and we *behove* to rejoice at it. He will now look forward

[1] The Scotticisms are printed in Italics.

to his evening at home, and you will be happy when you find you never *want* him. It will be a great pleasure when you hear him in the *trance*, and wipe his feet upon the *bass*. But Willy is not strong, and you must look well after him. I hope you do not let him *snuff* so much as he did. He had a sister, poor thing, who died early. She was remarkably clever, and well read, and most intelligent, but was always uncommonly *silly*.[1] In the autumn of '40 she had a *sair host*, and was aye *speaking through a cold*, and at dinner never did more than to *sup a few family broth*. I am afraid she did not *change her feet* when she came in from the wet one evening. I never *let on* that I observed anything to be wrong; but I remember asking her to come and *sit upon* the fire. But she went out and did not *take* the door with her. She lingered till next spring, when she had a great *income*,[2] and her parents were then too poor to take her south, and she died. I hope you will like the lassie Eppie we have sent you. She is a *discreet* girl, and comes of a decent family. She has a sister *married upon* a Seceding minister at Kirkcaldy. But I hear he expects to be *transported* soon. She was brought up in one of the *hospitals* here. Her father had been a *souter* and a *pawky chiel* enough, but was *doited* for many years, and her mother was *sair dottled*. We have been greatly interested in the hospital where Eppie was *educate*, and intended getting up a bazaar for it, and would have asked you to help us, as we were most anxious to raise some additional funds, when one of the Baillies died and left it *feuingstances* to the amount of 5000 pounds, which was really a great *mortification*. I am not a good *hand of write*, and therefore shall stop. I am very tired, and have been *gantin'*[3] for this half hour, and even in correspondence gantin' may be *smittin'*.[4] The *kitchen*[5] is just coming in, and I *feel a smell of tea*,

[1] Delicate in health. [2] Ailment.
[3] Yawning. [4] Catching. [5] Tea-urn.

so when I get my *four hours*, that will refresh me and set me up again.—I am your affectionate aunt,

"ISABEL DINGWALL."

The letter, then, we suppose written by a very old Forfarshire lady to her niece in England, and perhaps the young lady who received this letter might answer it in a style as strange to her aunt as her aunt's is to her, especially if she belonged to that lively class of our young female friends who indulge a little in phraseology which they have imbibed from their brothers or male cousins, who have perhaps, for their amusement, encouraged them in its use. The answer, then, might be something like this; and without meaning to be severe or satirical upon our young lady friends, I may truly say that though I never heard from one young lady all these *fast terms*, I have heard the most of them separately from many :—

"MY DEAR AUNTY,—Many thanks for your kind letter and its enclosure. From my not knowing Scotch, I am not quite up to the whole, and some of the expressions I don't twig at all. Willie is absent for a few days, but when he returns home he will explain it; he is quite awake on all such things. I am glad you are pleased that Willie and I are now spliced. I am well aware that you will hear me spoken of in some quarters as a fast young lady, but don't believe them. We get on famously at present. Willie comes home from the office every afternoon at five. We generally take a walk before dinner, and read and work if we don't go out; and I assure you we are very jolly. We don't know many people here yet. It is rather a swell neighbourhood; and if we can't get in with the nobs, depend upon it we will never take up with any society that is decidedly snobby. I dare say the girl you are sending will be very useful to us; our present one is an awful slow coach. But we hope some

day to sport buttons. My father and mother paid us a visit last week. The governor is well, and, notwithstanding years and infirmities, comes out quite a jolly old cove. He is, indeed, if you will pardon the partiality of a daughter, a regular brick. He says he will help us if we can't get on, and I make no doubt will in due time fork out the tin. I am busy working a cap for you, dear aunty; it is from a pretty German pattern, and I think when finished will be quite a stunner. There is a shop in Regent Street where I hire patterns, and can get six of them for 5 bob. I then return them without buying them, which I think a capital dodge. I hope you will sport it for my sake at your first tea and turn out.

"I have nothing more to say particular, but am always

"Your affectionate niece,

"ELIZA DINGWALL."

"*P.S.*—I am trying to break Willie off his horrid habit of taking snuff. I had rather see him take his cigar when we are walking. You will be told, I dare say, that I sometimes take a weed myself. It is not true, dear aunty."

Before leaving the question of change in Scottish expressions, it may be proper to add a few words on the subject of Scottish *dialects*—*i.e.*, on the differences which exist in different counties or localities in the Scottish tongue itself. These differences used to be as marked as different languages; of course they still exist amongst the peasantry as before. The change consists in their gradual vanishing from the conversation of the educated and refined. The dialects with which I am most conversant are the two which present the greatest contrast, *viz.*, the Angus and the Aberdeen, or the slow and broad Scotch —the quick and sharp Scotch. Whilst the one talks of "buuts and shoon," the other calls the same articles "beets and sheen." With the Aberdonian, "what"

is always "fat," or "fatten," "music" is "meesic," "brutes" are "breets;" "What are ye duing," of Southern Scotch, in Aberdeen would be "Fat are ye deein'?"[1] Thus, when a Southerner mentioned the death of a friend, a sharp lady of the granite city asked "Fat deed he o'?" which being utterly incomprehensible to the person asked, another Aberdonian lady kindly explained the question, and put it into language which she supposed *could* not be mistaken, as thus, "Fat did he dee o'?" If there was this difference between the Aberdeen and the Forfar dialect, how much greater must be that difference when contrasted with the *ore rotundo* language of an English southern dignitary. Such a one being present at a school examination in Aberdeen

[1] Ferguson, nearly a century ago, noted this peculiarity of dialect in his poem of "The Leith Races":—

"The Buchan bodies through the beach,
Their bunch of Findrams cry;
And skirl out bauld in Norland speech,
Gude speldans, *fa* will buy."

"Findon," or "Finnan haddies," are split, smoked, and partially dried haddocks. Fergusson, in using the word "*Findrams*," which is not found in our glossaries, has been thought to be in error, but his accuracy has been verified, singularly enough, within the last few days, by a worthy octogenarian Newhaven fisherman, bearing the characteristic name of Flucker, who remarked "that it was a word commonly used in his youth; and, above all," he added, "when Leith Races were held on the sands ye was like to be deeved wi' the lang-tongued hizzies skirling out, '*Aell a Findram Speldrains*,' and they jist ca'ed it that to get a better grip o't wi' their tongues."

In Galloway, in 1684, Symson, afterwards an ousted Episcopalian minister (of Kirkinner), notes some peculiarities in the speech of the people in that district. "Some of the countrey people, especially those of the elder sort, do very often omit the letter 'h' after 't' as ting for thing; tree for three; tach for thatch; wit for with; fait for faith; mout for mouth, etc.; and also, contrary to some north countrey people, they oftentimes pronounce 'w' for 'v,' as serwant for servant; and so they call the months of February, March, and April the *ware* quarter, from *ver*. * Hence their common proverb speaking of the stormes in February, '*Winter never comes till ware comes*.'" These peculiarities of language have almost disappeared—the immense influx of Irish emigrants during late years having exercised a perceptible influence over the dialect of Wigtonshire.

* *Ver*. The spring months—*e.g.*,
"This wes in *ver* quhen wynter tid."—*Barbour*.

wished to put some questions on Scripture history himself, and asked an intelligent boy, "What was the ultimate fate of Pharaoh?" This the boy not understanding, the master put the same question Aberdonicé, "Jemmy, fat was the hinner end o' Pharaoh," which called forth the ready reply, "He was drouned i' the Red Sea."

The power of Scottish phraseology, or rather of Scottish *language* could not be better displayed than in the following Aberdonian description of London theatricals:—Mr. Taylor, well known in London as having the management of the opera-house, had his father up from Aberdeen to visit him and see the wonders of the capital. When the old man returned home, his friends, anxious to know the impressions produced on his mind by scenes and characters so different from what he had been accustomed to at home, inquired what sort of business his son carried on? "Ou," said he (in reference to the operatic singers and the corps de ballet), "He just keeps a curn[1] o' quainies[2] and a wheen widdyfous,[3] and gars them fissle,[4] and loup, and mak murgeons,[5] to please the great fowk."

Another ludicrous interrogatory occurred regarding the death of a Mr. Thomas Thomson. It appeared there were two cousins of this name, both corpulent men. When it was announced that Mr. Thomas Thomson was dead, an Aberdeen friend of the family asked, "Fatten Thamas Thamson?" He was informed that it was a fat Thomas Thomson, upon which the Aberdeen query naturally arose, "Aye, but fatten fat Thamas Thamson?" A young lady from Aberdeen had been on a visit to Montrose, and was disappointed at finding there a great lack of beaus, and balls, and concerts. This lack was not made up to her by the invitations which she had received to dinner parties. And she thus expressed her feelings on the subject in her native dialect when asked how she

[1] A number. [2] Young girls. [3] Gallows birds.
[4] Make whistling noises. [5] Distorted gestures.

liked Montrose, "Indeed there's neither men nor meesic, and fat care I for meat." The dialect and the local feelings of Aberdeen were said to have produced some amusement in London, as displayed by the Lady of the Provost of Aberdeen, when accompanying her husband going up officially to the capital. Some persons to whom she had been introduced recommended her going to the opera as one of the sights worthy the attention of a stranger. The good lady, full of the greatness of her situation as wife of the provost, and knowing the sensation her appearance in public occasioned when in her own city, and supposing that a like excitement would accompany her with the London public, rather declined, under the modest plea, "Fat for should I gang to the opera, just to creat a confeesion." An aunt of mine, who knew Aberdeen well, used to tell a traditionary story of two Aberdonian ladies who, by their insinuations against each other, finely illustrated the force of the dialect then in common use. They had both of them been very attentive to a sick lady in declining health, and on her death each had felt a distrust of the perfect disinterestedness of the other's attention. This created more than a coolness between them, and the bad feeling came out on their passing in the street. The one insinuated her suspicions of unfair dealing with the property of the deceased by ejaculating, as the other passed her, "henny pig[1] and green tea," to which the other retorted, in the same spirit, "Silk coat and negligee!"[2]

I have not had leisure to pursue, as I had intended, a further consideration of Scottish dialect and their differences from each other in the north, south, east, and west of Scotland. I merely remark now, that the dialect of one district is considered quite barbarous, and laughed at by the inhabitants of another district where a different form of language is adopted. I have

[1] Honey jar. [2] A female garment then in common use.

spoken (p. 135) of the essential difference between Aberdeen and Southern Scotch. An English gentleman had been visiting the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and accompanied him to Aberdeen. His lordship of Edinburgh introduced his English friend to the Provost of Aberdeen, and they both attended a great dinner given by the latter. After grace had been said, the Provost kindly and hospitably addressed the company Aberdonicé —" Now, gentlemen, fah tee, fah tee." The Englishman whispered to his friend, and asked what was meant by " fah tee, fah tee " ; to which his lordship replied—" Hout, he canna speak—he means fau too, fau too." Thus one Scotticism was held in terror by those who used a different Scotticism, as at Inverary, the wife of the chief writer of the place, seeking to secure her guest from the taint of inferior society, intimated to him, but somewhat confidentially, that Mrs. W. (the rival writer's wife) was quite a vulgar body, so much so as to ask any one leaving the room to " *snib* the door," instead of bidding them, as she triumphantly observed, " *sneck* the door."

Any of my readers not much conversant with Aberdeen dialect will find the following a good specimen :—A lady who resided in Aberdeen, being on a visit to some friends in the country, joined an excursion on horseback. Not being much of an equestrian, she was mounted upon a Highland pony as being the *canniest baste.* He, however, had a trick of standing still in crossing a stream. A burn had to be crossed—the rest of the party passed on, while " Paddy " remained, pretending to drink. Miss More, in great desperation, called out to one of her friends— " Bell 'oman, turn back an gie me your bit fuppie, for the breet's stannin' i' the peel wi' ma."

There is no class of men which stands out more prominent in the Reminiscences of the last hundred years than that of our Scottish Judges. They form, in many instances, a type or representative of the leading *peculiarities* of

Scottish life and manners. They are mixed up with all our affairs, social and political. There are to be found in the annals of the bench rich examples of pure Scottish humour, the strongest peculiarity of Scottish phraseology, acuteness of intellect, cutting wit, eccentricity of manners, and abundant powers of conviviality. Their successors no longer furnish the same anecdotes of oddity or of intemperance. The Courts of the Scottish Parliament house, without lacking the learning or the law of those who sat there sixty years ago, lack not the refinement and the dignity that have long distinguished the Courts of Westminster Hall.

Stories still exist, traditionary in society, amongst its older members, regarding Lords Gardenstone, Monboddo, Hermand, Newton, Polkemmet, Braxfield, etc. But many younger persons do not know them. It may be interesting to some of my readers to devote a few pages on the subject, and to offer some judicial gleanings.[1]

I have two anecdotes to shew, that, both in social and judicial life, a remarkable change must have taken place amongst the "fifteen." I am assured that the following scene took place at the *table* of Lord Polkemmet, at a dinner party in his house. When the covers were removed, the dinner was seen to consist of veal broth, a roast fillet of veal, veal cutlets, a florentine (an excellent old Scottish dish composed of veal), a calf's head, calf's foot jelly. The worthy judge could not help observing a surprise on the countenance of his guests, and perhaps a simper on some; so he broke out in explanation; "Ou ay, it's a cauf; when we kill a beast we just eat up ae side, and doun the tither." The expressions he used to describe

[1] I have derived some information from a curious book, *Kay's Portraits*, 2 vols. The work is scarcely known in England, and is becoming scarce in Scotland. "Nothing can be more valuable in the way of engraved portraits than these representations of the distinguished men who adorned Edinburgh in the latter part of the eighteenth century."—*Chambers*.

his own *judicial* preparations for the bench, were very characteristic: "Ye see I first read a' the pleadings, and then, after letting them wamble in my wame wi' the toddy twa or three days, I gie my ain interlocutor." For a moment suppose such anecdotes to be told now of any of our high legal functionaries. Imagine the feelings of surprise that would be called forth were the present Justice-Clerk to adopt such imagery in describing the process of preparing *his* legal judgment on a difficult case in his court!

In regard to the wit of the Scottish *bar*. It is a subject which I do not pretend to illustrate. It would require a volume for itself. One anecdote, however, I cannot resist, and I record it as forming a striking example of the class of Scottish humour which, with our dialect, has lost its distinctive characteristics. John Clerk (afterwards a judge by the title of Lord Eldin) was arguing a Scotch appeal case before the House of Lords. His client claimed the use of a millstream by prescriptive right. Mr. Clerk spoke broad Scotch, and argued that "the *watter* had rin that way for forty years. Indeed naebody kenned how long, and why should his client now be deprived of the watter, etc." The Chancellor, much amused at the pronunciation of the Scottish advocate, in a rather bantering tone, asked him, "Mr. Clerk, do you spell water in Scotland with two t's?" Clerk, a little nettled at this hit at his national tongue, answered, "Na, my lord, we dinna spell watter (making the word as short as he could) wi' twa t's, but we spell mainners (making the word as long as he could) wi' twa n's."

John Clerk's vernacular version of the motto of the Celtic Club is highly characteristic of his humour and his prejudice. He had a strong dislike to the whole Highland race, and the motto assumed by the modern Celts, "Olim marte nunc arte," Clerk translated "formerly *rubbers*, now thieves." Very dry and pithy too

was his legal *opinion* given to a claimant of the Annandale peerage, who, when pressing the employment of some obvious forgeries, was warned that if he persevered, nae doot he might be a peer, but it would be a peer o' anither *tree!*

The following account of his conducting a case is also highly characteristic. Two individuals, the one a mason, the other a carpenter, both residenters in West Portsburgh, formed a copartnery, and commenced building houses within the boundaries of the burgh corporation. One of the partners was a freeman, the other not. The corporation, considering its rights invaded by a non-freeman exercising privileges only accorded to one of their body, brought an action in the court of Session against the interloper, and his partner, as aiding and abetting. Mr. John Clerk, then an advocate, was engaged for the defendants. How the cause was decided matters little. What was really curious in the affair, was the naïvely droll manner in which the advocate for the defence opened his pleading before the Lord Ordinary. "My lord," commenced John, in his purest Doric, at the same time pushing up his spectacles to his brow, and hitching his gown over his shoulders, "I wad hae thocht naething o't (the action), had hooses been a new invention, and my clients been caught ouvertly impingin' on the patent richts o' the inventors!"

Of Lord Gardenstone (Francis Garden) I have many early *personal* reminiscences, as his property of Johnstone was in the Howe of the Mearns, not far from Fasque. He was a man of energy, and promoted improvements in the county with skill and practical sagacity. His favourite scheme was to establish a flourishing town upon his property, and he spared no pains or expense in promoting the importance of his village of Laurencekirk. He built an excellent inn, to render it a stage for posting. He built and endowed an Episcopal chapel for the benefit of his

English immigrants, in the vestry of which he placed a most respectable library, and he encouraged manufacturers of all kinds to settle in the place. Amongst others a *hatter* came to reconnoitre, and ascertain its capabilities for exercising his calling. But when, on going to public worship on Sunday after his arrival, he found only *three* hats in the kirk, *viz.*, the minister's, Lord Gardenstone's and his own—the rest of the congregation all wearing the old flat Lowland bonnet—he soon went off, convinced that Laurencekirk was no place for hatters to thrive in. He was much taken up with his hotel or inn, and for which he provided a large volume for receiving the written contributions of travellers who frequented it. It was the landlady's business to present this volume to the guests, and ask them to write in it, during the evenings, whatever occurred to their memory or their imagination. In the mornings it was a favourite amusement of Lord Gardenstone to look it over. I recollect Sir Walter Scott being much taken with this contrivance, and his asking me about it at Abbotsford. His son said to him, "You should establish such a book, sir, at Melrose;" upon which Sir W. replied, "No, Walter, I should just have to see a great deal of abuse of myself." On his son deprecating such a result, and on his observing my surprised look, he answered, "Well, well, I should have to read a great deal of foolish praise, which is much the same thing." An amusing account is given of the cause of Lord Gardenstone withdrawing this volume from the hotel, and of his determination to submit it no more to the tender mercies of the passing traveller. As Professor Stuart of Aberdeen was passing an evening at the inn, the volume was handed to him, and he wrote in it the following lines, in the style of the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer:—

"Frae sma' beginnings Rome of auld
Became a great imperial city,
'Twas peopled first, as we are tauld,
By bankrupts, vagabonds, banditti.

Quoth Thamas: then the day may come,
When Laurencekirk shall equal Rome."

These lines so nettled Lord Gardenstone, that the volume disappeared, and was never seen afterwards in the inn of Laurencekirk. There is another lingering reminiscence which I retain connected with the inn at Laurencekirk. The landlord, Mr. Cream, was a man well known throughout all the county, and was distinguished in late years as one of the few men who continued to wear a *pigtail*. On one occasion the late Lord Dunmore (grandfather or great-grandfather of the present peer), who also still wore his queue, halted for a night at Laurencekirk. On the host leaving the room, where he had come to take orders for supper, Lord Dunmore turned to his valet and said, "Johnstone, do I look as like a fool in my pigtail as Billy Cream does?"—"Much about it, my lord," was the valet's imperturbable answer. "Then," said his lordship, "cut off mine to-morrow morning when I dress."

Lord Gardenstone seemed to have had two favourite tastes: he indulged in the love of pigs and the love of snuff. He took a young pig as a pet, and it became quite tame, and followed him about like a dog. At first the animal shared his bed, but when growing up to advanced swinehood, it became unfit for such companionship, he had it to sleep in his room, in which he made a comfortable couch for it of his own clothes. His snuff he kept not in a box, but in a leathern waist-pocket made for the purpose. He took it in enormous quantities, and used to say that if he had a dozen noses he would feed them all. Lord Gardenstone died 1793.

Lord Monboddo (James Burnet, Esq., of Monboddo) is another of the well-known members of the Scottish Bench, who combined, with many eccentricities of opinion and habits, great learning and a most amiable disposition. From his paternal property being in the county of Kincardine, and Lord M. being a visitor at my father's house,

and indeed a relation or clansman, I have many early reminiscences of stories which I have heard of the learned judge. His speculations regarding the origin of the human race have, in times past, excited much interest and amusement. His theory was that man emerged from a wild and savage condition, much resembling that of apes; that man had then a tail like other animals, but which, by progressive civilization and the constant habit of *sitting*, had become obsolete. This theory produced many a joke from facetious and superficial people, who had never read any of the arguments of an elaborate work, by which the ingenious and learned author maintained his theory.[1] Lord Kames, a brother judge, had a hit at it. On some occasion of their meeting, Lord Monboddo was for giving Lord Kames the precedency. Lord K. declined, and drew back saying, "By no means; my lord; you must walk first, that I may *see your tail*." I recollect Lord Monboddo's coming to dine at Fasque caused a great excitement of interest and curiosity. I was in the nursery, too young to take part in the investigations; but my elder brothers were on the alert to watch his arrival, and get a glimpse of his tail. Lord M. was really a learned man, read Greek and Latin authors—not as a mere exercise of classical scholarship—but because he identified himself with their philosophical opinions, and would have revived Greek customs and modes of life. He used to give suppers after the manner of the ancients, and used to astonish his guests by the ancient cookery of Spartan broth, and of *mulsum*. He was an enthusiastical Platonist. On a visit to Oxford, he was received with great respect by the scholars of the University, who were much interested in meeting with one who had studied Plato, as a pupil and follower. In accordance with the old custom at learned universities, Lord Monboddo was determined to address the Oxonians in Latin, which he

[1] *Origin and Progress of Language.*

spoke with much readiness. But they could not stand the numerous attacks upon the head of Priscian. Lord Monboddo shocked the ears of the men of Eton and of Winchester by dreadful false quantities—verse-making being, in Scotland, then quite neglected, and a matter little thought of by the learned judge.

Lord Monboddo was considered an able lawyer, and on many occasions exhibited a very clear and correct judicial discernment of intricate cases. It was one of his peculiarities that he never sat on the bench with his brother judges, but always at the clerk's table. Different reasons for this practice have been given, but the simple fact seems to have been, that he was deaf, and heard better at the lower seat. His mode of travelling was on horseback. He scorned carriages, on the ground of its being unmanly to "sit in a box drawn by brutes." When he went to London he rode the whole way. At the same period, the late Mr. Barclay of Ury (father of the late laird), when he represented Kincardineshire in Parliament, always *walked* to London. He was a very powerful man, and could walk fifty miles a day, his usual refreshment on the road being a bottle of port wine, poured into a bowl, and drunk off at a draught. I have heard that George III. was much interested at these performances, and said, "I ought to be proud of my Scottish subjects, when my judges *ride*, and my members of Parliament *walk* to the Metropolis."

On one occasion of his being in London, Lord Monboddo attended a trial in the Court of King's Bench. A cry was heard that the roof of the court-room was giving way, upon which judges, lawyers, and people made a rush to get to the door. Lord Monboddo viewed the scene from his corner with much composure. Being deaf and short-sighted, he knew nothing of the cause of the tumult. The alarm proved a false one; and on being asked why he had not bestirred himself to escape like the rest, he coolly

answered that he supposed it was an *annual ceremony*, with which, as an alien to the English laws, he had no concern, but which he considered it interesting to witness as a remnant of antiquity. Lord Monboddo died 1799.

Lord Rockville (the Hon. Alexander Gordon, third son of the Earl of Aberdeen) was a judge distinguished in his day by his ability and decorum. "He adorned the bench by the dignified manliness of his appearance, and polished urbanity of his manners."[1] Like most lawyers of his time, he took his glass freely, and a whimsical account which he gave, before he was advanced to the bench, of his having fallen upon his face, after making too free with the bottle, was commonly current at the time. Upon his appearing late at a convivial club with a most rueful expression of countenance, and on being asked what was the matter, he exclaimed with great solemnity, "Gentlemen, I have just met with the most extraordinary adventure that ever occurred to a human being. As I was walking along the Grassmarket, all of a sudden *the street rose up and struck me on the face.*" He had, however, a more serious *encounter* with the street after he was a judge. In 1792, his foot slipped as he was going to the Parliament House, he broke his leg, was taken home, fevered, and died.

Lord Braxfield (Robert M'Queen of Braxfield) was one of the judges of the old school, well known in his day, and might be said to possess all the qualities united, by which the class were remarkable. He spoke the broadest Scotch. He was a sound and laborious lawyer. He was fond of a glass of good claret, and had a great fund of good Scotch humour. He rose to the dignity of Justice-Clerk, and, in consequence, presided at many important political criminal trials about the year 1793-4, such as those of Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot, Gerrold, etc. He conducted these trials with much ability and

[1] *Douglas' Peerage*, vol. i., p. 22.

great firmness, occasionally, no doubt, with more appearance of severity and personal prejudice than is usual with the judges who in later times are called on to preside on similar occasions. The disturbed temper of the times and the daring spirit of the political offenders seemed, he thought, to call for a bold and fearless front on the part of the judge, and Braxfield was the man to shew it, both on the bench and in common life. He met, however, sometimes with a spirit as bold as his own from the prisoners before him. When Skirving was on trial for sedition he thought Braxfield was threatening him, and by gesture endeavouring to intimidate him; accordingly, he boldly addressed the bench:—"It is altogether unavailing for your Lordship to menace me, for I have long learnt not to fear the face of man." I have observed that he adhered to the *broadest* Scottish dialect. "Hae ye ony coonsel, man?" he said to Maurice Margarot (who, I believe, was an Englishman). "No," was the reply. "Div ye want to hae ony appinted?" "No," replied Margarot; "I only want an *interpreter* to make me understand what your Lordship says." Braxfield had much humour, and enjoyed wit in others. He was immensely delighted at a reply by Dr. M'Cubbin, the minister of Bothwell. Braxfield, when Justice-Clerk, was dining at Lord Douglas', and observed there was only port upon the table. In his usual off-hand brusque manner, he demanded of the noble host if "there was nae claret i' the castle." "Yes," said Lord Douglas; "but my butler tells me it is not good." "Let's pree't," said Braxfield in his favourite dialect. A bottle was produced, and declared by all present to be quite excellent. "Noo, minister," said the old judge, addressing Dr. M'Cubbin, who was celebrated as a wit in his day, "as a *famma clamosa* has gone forth against this wine, I propose that you absolve it,"—playing upon the terms made use of in the Scottish Church Courts. "Ay, my Lord," said the minister, "you are

first-rate authority for a case of civil or criminal law, but you do not quite understand our Church Court practice. We never absolve *till after three several appearances*." The wit and the condition of absolution were alike relished by the judge. Lord Braxfield closed a long and useful life in 1799.

Of Lord Hermand we have spoken on several occasions, and his name has become in some manner identified with that conviviality which marked almost as a characteristic the Scottish bench of his time. He gained, however, great distinction as a judge, and was a capital lawyer. When at the bar, Lords Newton and Hermand were great friends, and many were the convivial meetings they enjoyed together. But Lord Hermand outlived all his old last-century contemporaries, and formed with Lord Balgray what we may consider the connecting links between the past and the present race of Scottish lawyers.

We could scarcely perhaps offer a more marked difference between habits *once* tolerated on the bench and those which now distinguish the august seat of senators of justice than by quoting, from *Kay's Portraits*, vol. ii., p. 278, a sally of a Lord of Session, of those days, which he played off, when sitting as judge, upon a young friend whom he was determined to frighten. " On one occasion, a young counsel was addressing him on some not very important point that had arisen in the division of a common (or commonty, according to law phraseology), when, having made some bold averment, the judge exclaimed, 'That's a lee, Jemmie.' 'My lord!' ejaculated the amazed barrister. 'Ay, ay, Jemmie; I see by your face ye're leein'.' 'Indeed, my lord, I am not.' 'Dinna tell me that; it's no in your memorial (brief)—awa wi' you;' and, overcome with astonishment and vexation, the discomfited barrister left the bar. The judge thereupon chuckled with infinite delight; and beckoning to the clerk who attended on the occasion, he said, 'Are ye no

Rabbie H ——'s man?' 'Yes, my lord.' 'Was na Jemmie —— leein'?' 'Oh no, my lord.' 'Ye're quite sure?' 'Oh yes.' 'Then just write out what you want, and I'll sign it; my faith, but I made Jemmie stare.' So the decision was dictated by the clerk, and duly signed by the judge, who left the bench highly diverted with the fright he had given his young friend." Such scenes enacted in Court *now* would astonish the present generation, both of lawyers and of suitors.

Under this head of Scottish dialect, language, and phraseology, we naturally introduce some notice of that most interesting subject connected with our national literature which belongs to Scottish PROVERBIAL expressions. It is an old remark, that the characteristics of a people are always found in such sayings, and the expression of Bacon has been often quoted—"The genius, wit, and wisdom of a nation are discovered by their proverbs." Now, as there can be no doubt that there are proverbs exclusively Scottish, and that as in them we find also many traits of Scottish character, and many peculiar forms of Scottish thought and Scottish language, sayings of this kind, once so familiar, should have a place in our Scottish reminiscences. Indeed, proverbs are literally, in many instances, become *reminiscences*. They now seem to belong to that older generation whom we recollect, and who used them in conversation freely and constantly. To strengthen an argument or illustrate a remark by a proverb, was then a common practice in conversation. Their use, however, is now considered vulgar, and their formal application is almost prohibited by the rules of polite society. Lord Chesterfield denounced the practice of quoting proverbs as a palpable violation of all polite refinement in conversation. Notwithstanding all this, we acknowledge having much pleasure in recalling our national proverbial expressions. They are full of character,

and we find amongst them important truths, expressed forcibly, wisely, and gracefully.

All nations have their proverbs, and a vast number of books have been written on the subject. We find, accordingly, that collections have been made of proverbs considered as belonging peculiarly to Scotland. The collections to which I have had access are the following :—

1. The fifth edition, by Balfour, of *Ray's Complete Collection of English Proverbs*, in which is a separate collection of those which are considered Scottish Proverbs—1813. Ray professes to have taken these from Fergusson's work mentioned below.

2. A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs explained and made intelligible to the English reader, by James Kelly, M.A., published in London, 1721.

3. Scottish Proverbs gathered together by David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and put *ordine alphabetico* when he departed this life anno 1598. Edinburgh, 1641.

4. A collection of Scots Proverbs, dedicated to the Tenantry of Scotland, by Allan Ramsay. This collection is found in the edition of his Poetical Works, 3 vols. post octavo, Edin., 1818, but is not in the handsome edition of 1800. London, 2 vols. 8vo.[1]

5. Scottish Proverbs, collected and arranged by Andrew Henderson. With an introductory Essay by W. Motherwell. Edin. 1832.

6. The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland, an address to the School of Arts, by William Stirling of Keir, M.P. Stirling and Edin. 1855.

The collection of Ray, the great English naturalist, is well known. The two first editions, published at

[1] This was pointed out to me by Sir John Melville, who kindly supplied me with the three-volume edition.

Cambridge in 1670 and 1678, were by the author; subsequent editions were by other editors.

The work by James Kelly professes to collect Scottish Proverbs only. It is a volume of nearly 400 pages, and contains a short explanation or commentary attached to each, and often parallel sayings from other languages.[1] Mr. Kelly bears ample testimony to the extraordinary free use made of proverbs in his time by his countrymen and by himself. He says that "there were current in society upwards of 3000 proverbs, exclusively Scottish." He adds, "the Scots are wonderfully given to this way of speaking, and as the consequence of that, abound with proverbs, many of which are very expressive, quick, and home to the purpose; and, indeed, this humour prevails universally over the whole nation, especially among the better sort of the commonalty, none of whom will discourse with you any considerable time, but he will affirm every assertion and observation with a Scottish proverb. To that nation I owe my birth and education; and to that manner of speaking I was used from my infancy, to such a degree that I became in some measure remarkable for it." This was written in 1721, and we may see from Mr. Kelly's account what a change has taken place in society as regards this mode of intercourse. Our author states that he has "omitted in his collection many popular proverbs which are very pat and expressive," and adds as his reason, that "since it does not become a man of manners to use them, it does not become a man of my age and profession to write them." What was Mr. Kelly's profession or what his age does not appear from any statements in this volume; but, judging by many proverbs which he has *retained*, those which consideration of years and of profession induced him to omit, must have been bad

[1] Amongst many acts of kindness and essential assistance which I have received and am constantly receiving from my friend Mr. Hugh James Rollo, I owe my introduction to this interesting Scottish volume, now I believe rather scarce.

indeed, and unbecoming for *any* age or *any* profession.[1] The third collection, by Mr. Fergusson, is mentioned by Kelly as the only one which had been made before his time, and that he had not met with it till he had made considerable progress in his own collection. The book is now extremely rare, and fetches a high price. By the great kindness of the learned librarian, I have been permitted to see the copy belonging to the library of the Writers to the Signet. It is the first edition, and very rare. A quaint little thin volume, such as delights the eyes of true bibliomaniacs, unpaged, and published at Edinburgh, 1641—although on the title-page the proverbs are said to have been collected at Mr. Fergusson's death, 1598.[2] There is no preface or notice by the author, but an address from the printer, "to the merrie, judicious, and discreet reader."

The proverbs, amounting to 945, are given without any comment or explanation; many of them are of a very antique cast of language; indeed some would be to most persons quite unintelligible without a lexicon.

The printer, in his address, "to the merrie, judicious, and discreet reader," refers in the following quaint expressions to the author:—"Therefore manie in this realme that hath hard of David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and of his quick answers and speeches, both to great persons and others inferiours, and hath heard of his proverbs which hee gathered together in his time, and now we put downe according to the order of the alphabet; and manie of all ranks of persons, being verie desirous to have the said proverbs, I have thought good to put them to the presse for thy better satisfaction. . . . I know that there may be some that will say and marvell that a minister should

[1] Kelly's book is constantly quoted by Jamieson, and is, indeed, an excellent work for the study of good old Scotch.

[2] This probably throws back the collection to about the middle of the century.

have taken pains to gather such proverbs together; but they that knew his forme of powerfull preaching the word, and his ordinar talking, ever almost using proverbiall speeches, will not finde fault with this that hee hath done. And whereas there are some old Scottish words not in use now, bear with that, because if ye alter those words, the proverb will have no grace; and so, recommending these proverbs to thy good use, I bid thee farewell."

I now subjoin a few of Ferguson's Proverbs, verbatim, which are of a more obsolete character, and have appended explanations, of the correctness of which, however, I am not quite confident:—

A year a nurish,[1] *seven year a da.*[2] Refers, I presume, to fulfilling the maternal office.

Anes payit never cravit. Debts once paid give no more trouble.

All wald[3] *have all, all wald forgie.*[4] Those who exact much should be ready to concede.

A gangang[5] *fit*[6] *is aye*[7] *gettin* (*gin*[8] *it were but a thorn*), or, as it sometimes runs, *gin it were but a broken tae, i.e.*, toe. A man of industry will certainly get a living, though the proverb is often applied to those who went abroad and got a mischief when they might safely have stayed at home—(Kelly).

All crakes,[9] *all bears.*[10] Spoken against bullies who kept a great hectoring, and yet, when put to it, tamely pocket an affront—(Kelly).

Bourd[11] *not wi bawtie*[12] (*lest he bite you*). Do not jest too familiarly with your superiors (Kelly), or with dangerous characters.

Bread's house skailed never.[13] While people have bread they need not give up housekeeping. Spoken

[1] Nurse. [2] Daw, a slut. [3] Would. [4] Forgive. [5] Going or moving. [6] Foot. [7] Always. [8] If. [9] Boasters. [10] Used as cowards (?). [11] Jest. [12] A dog's name. [13] To skail house, to disfurnish.

when one has bread and wishes something better.—(Kelly).

Crabbit[1] *was and cause had.* Spoken ironically of persons put out of temper without adequate cause.

Dame, deem[2] *warily* (*ye watna*[3] *wha wytes*[4] *yersell*).—Spoken to remind those who pass harsh censures on others that they may themselves be censured.

Efter lang mint[5] *never dint.*[6] Spoken of long and painful labour producing little effect. Kelly's reading is "*Lang mint little dint.*" Spoken when men threaten much and dare not execute—(Kelly).

Fill fou[7] *and haud*[8] *fou maks a stark*[9] *man.* In Border language a *stark* man was one who takes and keeps boldly.

He that crabbs[10] *without cause should mease*[11] *without mends.*[12] Spoken to remind those who are angry without cause, that they should not be particular in requiring apologies from others.

He is worth na weill that may not bide na wae. He deserves not the sweet that will not taste the sour. He does not deserve prosperity who cannot meet adversity.

Kame[13] *sindle*[14] *kame sair*[15] Applied to those who forbear for a while, but when once roused can act with severity.

Kamesters[16] *are aye creeshie*[17]. It is usual for men to look like their trade.

Let alone makes mony lurden.[18] Want of correction makes many a bad boy—(Kelly).

Mony tynes[19] *the half mark*[20] *whinger*[21] (*for the halfe*

[1] Being angry or cross. [2] Judge. [3] Know not. [4] Blames. [5] To aim at. [6] A stroke. [7] Full. [8] Hold. [9] Potent or strong. [10] Is angry. [11] Settle. [12] Amends. [13] Comb. [14] Seldom. [15] Painfully. [16] Wool combers. [17] Greasy. [18] Worthless fellow. [19] Loses. [20] Sixpenny.

[21] A sort of dagger or hanger which seems to have been used both at meals as a knife and in broils—

> And *whingers* now in friendship bare,
> The social meal to part and share.
> Had found a bloody sheath.—*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

pennie whang).[1] Another version of penny wise and pound foolish.

Na plie[2] *is best.*

Reavers[3] *should not be rewers.*[4] Those who are so fond of a thing as to snap at it, should not repent when they have got it—(Kelly).

Sokand seill is best. The interpretation of this proverb is not obvious, and later writers do not appear to have adopted it from Fergusson. It is quite clear that Sok or Sock is the ploughshare. Seil is happiness, as in Kelly. "Seil comes not till sorrow be o'er;" and in Aberdeen they say, "Seil o' your face," to express a blessing. My reading is "the plough and happiness the best lot." The happiest life is the healthy country one. See Robert Burns' spirited song with the chorus—

> "Up wi' my ploughman lad,
> And hey my merry ploughman;
> Of a' the trades that I do ken,
> Commend me to the ploughman."

A somewhat different reading of this very obscure and now indeed obsolete proverb has been suggested by an esteemed and learned friend—"I should say rather it meant that the ploughshare, or country life, accompanied with good luck or fortune, was best; *i.e.*, that industry coupled with good fortune (good seasons and the like) was the combination that was most to be desired. *Sœl* in Anglo-Saxon as a noun means *opportunity*, and then good luck, happiness, etc.

There's mae[5] *madines*[6] *nor makines.*[7] Girls are more plentiful in the world than hares.

Ye bried[8] *of the gouk,*[9] *ye have not a rhyme*[10] *but anc.* Applied to persons who tire everybody by constantly harping on one subject.

The collection by Allan Ramsay is very good, and

[1] Thong. [2] No lawsuit. [3] Robbers. [4] Rue, to repent. [5] More. [6] Maidens. [7] Hares. [8] Take after. [9] Cuckoo. [10] Note.

professes to correct the errors of former collectors. I have now before me the *first edition*, Edinburgh, 1737, with the appropriate motto on the title page, "That maun be true that a' men say." This edition contains proverbs only, the number being 2,464. Some proverbs in this collection I do not find in others, and one quality it possesses in a remarkable degree—it is very Scotch. The language of the proverbial wisdom has the true Scottish flavour; not only is this the case with the proverbs themselves, but the dedication to the tenantry of Scotland, prefixed to the collection, is written in pure Scottish dialect. From this dedication I make an extract, which falls in with our plan of recording Scotch reminiscences, as Allan Ramsay there states the great value set upon proverbs in his day, and the importance which he attaches to them as teachers of moral wisdom, and as combining amusement with instruction. The prose of Allan Ramsay has, too, a spice of his poetry in its composition. His dedication is, To the tenantry of Scotland, farmers of the dales, and storemasters of the hills—

"Worthy friends—The following hoard of wise sayings and observations of our forefathers, which have been gathering through mony bygane ages, I have collected with great care, and restored to their proper sense. . . .

"As naething helps our happiness mair than to have the mind made up wi' right principles, I desire you, for the thriving and pleasure of you and yours, to use your een and lend your lugs to these guid *auld saws*, that shine wi' wail'd sense, and will as lang as the warld wags. Gar your bairns get them by heart; let them have a place among your family-books, and may never a window-sole through the country be without them. On a spare hour, when the day is clear, behind a ruck, or on the green howm draw the treasure frae your pouch, an' enjoy the pleasant companion. Ye happy herds, while your

hirdsell are feeding on the flowery braes, you may eithly make yoursells master of the haleware. How usefou' will it prove to you (wha hae sae few opportunities of common clattering) when ye forgather wi' your friends at kirk or market, banquet or bridal! By your proficiency you'll be able, in the proverbial way, to keep up the saul of a conversation that is baith blyth an usefou."

Mr. Henderson's work is a compilation from those already mentioned. It is very copious, and the introductory essay contains some excellent remarks upon the wisdom and wit of Scottish proverbial sayings.

Mr. Stirling's address, like everything he writes, indicates a minute and profound knowledge of his subject, and is full of picturesque and just views of human nature. He attaches much importance to the teaching conveyed in proverbial expressions, and recommends his readers even still to collect such proverbial expressions as may yet linger in conversation, because, as he observes, "If it is not yet registered, it is possible that it might have died with the tongue from which you took it, and so have been lost for ever." "I believe," he adds, "the number of good old saws still floating as waifs and strays on the tide of popular talk to be much greater than might at first appear."

One remark is applicable to all these collections, viz., that out of so large a number there are many of them on which we have little grounds for deciding that they are *exclusively* Scottish. In fact, some are mere translations of proverbs adopted by many nations; some of universal adoption. Thus we have—

A burnt bairn fire dreads.
Ae swallow makes nae simmer.
Faint heart ne'er wan fair lady.
Ill weeds wax weel.
Mony smas mak a muckle.
O' twa ills chuse the least.
Set a knave to grip a knave.
Twa wits are better than ane.

There's nae fule to an auld fule.
Ye canna mak a silk purse o' a sow's lug.
Ae bird i' the hand is worth twa fleeing.
Mony cooks neer made gude kail.

Of numerous proverbs such as these, some may or may not be original in the Scottish. Mr. Stirling remarks, that many of the best and oldest proverbs may be common to all people—may have occurred to all. In our national collections, therefore, some of the proverbs may be simply translations into Scotch of what have been long considered the property of other nations. Still, I hope, it is not a mere national partiality to say that many of the common proverbs *gain* much by such translation from other tongues. All that I would attempt now is, to select some of our more popular proverbial sayings, which many of us can remember as current amongst us, and were much used by the late generation in society, and to add a few from the collections I have named, which bear a very decided Scottish stamp either in turn of thought or in turn of language.

I remember being much struck the first time I heard the application of that pretty Scottish saying regarding a fair bride. I was walking in Montrose, a day or two before her marriage, with a young lady a connection of mine, who merited this description, when she was kindly accosted by an old friend, an honest fishwife of the town, "Weel, Miss Elizabeth, hae ye gotten a' yer claes ready?" to which the young lady modestly answered, "Oh, Janet, my claes are soon got ready;" and Janet replied, in the old Scottish proverb "Ay, well, *a bonny bride's sune busket*,"[1] In the old collection, an addition less sentimental is made to this proverb, *A short horse is sune wispit.*[2]

To encourage strenuous exertions to meet difficult circumstances, is well expressed by *Setting a stout heart to a stey brae.* This mode of expressing that the worth

[1] Attired. [2] Curried.

of a handsome woman outweighs even her beauty, has a very Scottish character—*She's better than she's bonny.* The opposite of this was expressed by a Highlander of his own wife, when he somewhat ungrammatically said of her, "*She's bonnier than she's better.*"

The frequent evil to harvest operations from autumnal rains and fogs in Scotland is well told in the saying, *A dry summer ne'er made a dear peck.*

There can be no question as to country in the following, which seems to express generally that persons may have the name and appearance of greatness without the reality—*A' Stuarts are na sib*[1] *to the king.*

There is an excellent Scottish version of the common proverb, "He that's born to be hanged will never be drowned."—*The water will never warr*[2] *the widdie,* i.e., never cheat the gallows. This saying received a very naïve practical application during the anxiety and alarm of a storm. One of the passengers, a good simple-minded minister, was sharing the alarm that was felt round him, until spying one of his parishioners, of whose ignominious end he had long felt persuaded, exclaimed to himself, "Oh, we are all safe now," and accordingly accosted the poor man with strong assurances of the great pleasure he had in seeing him on board.

It's ill getting the breeks aff the Highlandman is a proverb that savours very strong of a Lowland Scotch origin. Having suffered loss at the hands of their neighbours from the hills, this was a mode of expressing the painful truth, that there was little hope of obtaining redress from those who had not the means of supplying it.

Proverbs connected with the bag-pipes I set down as legitimate Scotch, as thus, *Ye are as lang in tuning your pipes as anither wad play a spring.*[3] You are as long in setting about a thing as another would be in doing it.

[1] Related. [2] Outrun. [3] Tune.

There is a set of Scottish proverbs which we may group together as containing one quality in common, and that in reference to the Evil Spirit, and to his agency in the world. This is a reference often, I fear, too lightly made; but I am not conscious of anything deliberately profane or irreverent in the following :—

The deil's nae sae ill as he's caaed. The most of people may be found to have some redeeming good point: applied in *Guy Mannering* by the Deacon to Gilbert Glossin, upon his intimating his intention to come to his shop soon for the purpose of laying in his winter stock of groceries.

To the same effect, *It's a sin to lee on the deil.* Even of the worst people, *truth* at least should be spoken.

He should hae a lang shafted spune that sups kail wi' the deil. He should be well guarded and well protected that has to do with cunning and unprincipled men.

Lang ere the deil dee by the dyke-side. Spoken when the improbable death of some powerful and ill-disposed person is talked of.

Let ae deil ding anither. Spoken when two bad persons are at variance over some evil work.

The deil's bairns hae deil's luck. Spoken enviously when ill people prosper.

The deil's a busy bishop in his ain diocie. Bad men are sure to be active in promoting their own bad ends. A quaint proverb of this class I have been told of as coming from the reminiscences of an old lady of quality, to recommend a courteous manner to every one: *It's aye gude to be ceevil, as the auld wife said when she beckit*[1] *to the deevil.*

Raise nae mair deils than ye are able to lay. Provoke no strifes which ye may be unable to appease.

The deil's aye gude to his ain. A malicious proverb,

[1] Curtsied.

spoken as if those whom we disparage were deriving their success from bad causes.

Ye wad do little for God an the deevil was dead. A sarcastic mode of telling a person that fear, rather than love or principle, is the motive to his good conduct.

In the old collection already referred to is a proverb which I quote unwillingly, and yet which I do not like to omit. It is doubtful against whom it took its origin, whether as a satire against the decanal order in general, or against some obnoxious dean in particular: *The Deil an the Dean begin wi' ae letter. When the Deil has the Dean the kirk will be the better.*

The deil's gane ower Jock Wabster, is a saying which I have been accustomed to in my part of the country from early years. It expresses generally misfortune or confusion, but I am not quite sure of the *exact* meaning, or who is represented by Jock Wabster. It was a great favourite with Sir Walter Scott, who quotes it twice in *Rob Roy*. Allan Ramsay introduces it in the *Gentle Shepherd* to express the misery of married life when the first dream of love has passed away :—

> "The 'Deil gaes ower Jock Wabster,' hame grows hell,
> When Pate misca's ye waur than tongue can tell."

There are two very pithy Scottish proverbial expressions for describing the case of young women losing their chance of good marriages, by setting their aims too high. Thus an old lady, speaking of her grand-daughter having made what she considered a poor match, described her as having "lookit at the moon, and lichtit[1] in the midden."

It is recorded again of a celebrated beauty, Becky Monteith, that being asked how she had not made a good marriage, having replied, "Ye see, I wadna hae the walkers and the riders gaed by."

It's ill to wauken sleeping dogs. It is bad policy to

[1] Fell.

rouse dangerous and mischievous people, who are for the present quiet.

It is nae mair pity to see a woman greit than to see a goose barefit. A harsh and ungallant reference to the facility with which the softer sex can avail themselves of tears to carry a point.

A Scots mist will weet an Englishman to the skin. A proverb evidently of Caledonian origin, arising from the frequent complaints made by English visitors of the heavy mists which hang about our hills, and which are found to annoy the southern traveller as it were downright rain.

Keep your ain fish guts to your ain sea maws. This was a favourite proverb with Sir Walter Scott when he meant to express the policy of first considering the interests that are nearest home. The saying savours of the fishing population of the east coast.

A Yule feast may be done at Pasch. Festivities, although usually practised at Christmas, need not, on suitable occasions, be confined to any season.

It's better to sup wi' a cutty than want a spune. Cutty means anything short, stumpy, and not of full growth; frequently applied to a short-handled horn spoon. As Meg Merilees says to the bewildered Dominie, "If ye dinna eat instantly, by the bread and salt, I'll put it down your throat wi' the *cutty spune*."

"*Fules mak feasts and wise men eat 'em*, my Lord." This was said to a Scottish nobleman on his giving a great entertainment, and who readily answered, "Ay, and *Wise men make proverbs and fools repeat 'em.*"

A green Yule[1] *and a white Pays*[2] *mak a fat kirk-yard.* A very coarse proverb, but may express a general truth as regards the effects of season on the human frame. Another of a similar character is, *An air*[3] *winter maks a sair*[4] *winter.*

[1] Christmas. [2] Pasch or Easter. [3] Early. [4] Severe.

Wha will bell the cat? The proverb is used in reference to a proposal for accomplishing a difficult or dangerous task, and alludes to the fable of the poor mice proposing to put a bell about the cat's neck, that they might be apprised of his coming. The historical application is well known. When the nobles of Scotland proposed to go in a body to Stirling to take Cochrane, the favourite of James the Third, and hang him, the Lord Gray asked, "It is well said, but wha will bell the cat?" The Earl of Angus accepted the challenge, and effected the object. To his dying day he was called Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

Ye hae tint the tongue o' the trump. "Trump" is a Jew's harp. To lose the tongue of it is to lose what is essential to its sound.

Meat and mass hinders nae man. Needful food, and suitable religious exercises, should not be spared under greatest haste.

Ye fand it whar the highland man fand the tangs (*i.e.*, at the fireside). A hit at our mountain neighbours, who occasionally took from the Lowlands—as having found —something that was never *lost.*

His head will ne'er fill his father's bonnet A picturesque way of expressing that the son will never equal the influence and ability of his sire.

His bark is waur nor his bite. A good-natured apology for one who is good-hearted and rough in speech.

Do as the cow of Forfar did, tak a standing drink. This proverb relates to an occurrence which gave rise to a lawsuit and a whimsical legal decision. A woman in Forfar, who was brewing, set out her tub of beer to cool. A cow came by and drank it up. The owner of the cow was sued for compensation, but the bailies of Forfar, who tried the case, acquitted the owner of the cow, on the ground that the farewell drink, called in the Highlands the *dochan doris,*[1] or stirrup cup, taken by the guest

[1] The proper orthography of this expression is deoch-an-doruis

standing at the door, was never charged, and as the cow had taken but a standing drink outside, it could not, according to the Scottish usage, be chargeable. Sir Walter Scott has humorously alluded to this circumstance in the notes to Waverley, but has not mentioned it as the subject of an old Scotch proverb.

Bannocks are better nor nae kind o' bread. Evidently Scottish. Better have oatmeal cakes to eat than be in want of wheaten loaves.

Folly is a bonny dog. Meaning, I suppose, that many are imposed upon by the false appearances and attractions of vicious pleasures.

The e'ening brings a' hame, is an interesting saying, meaning, that the evening of life, or the approach of death, softens many of our political and religious differences. I do not find this proverb in the older collections, but Mr. Stirling justly calls it "a beautiful proverb, which, lending itself to various uses, may be taken as an expression of faith in the gradual growth and spread of large-hearted Christian charity, the noblest result of our happy freedom of thought and discussion." The literal idea of the "e'ening bringing a' hame," has a high and illustrious antiquity, as in the fragment of Sappho, Εσπερε, παντα φὲρεις—φὲρεις ὄϊν (or οἶνον) φὲρεις αἶγα, φὲρεις ματὲρι παῖδα—which is thus paraphrased by Lord Byron in *Don Juan*, iii. 107:—

> O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
> Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer;
> To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
> The welcome stall to the o'erlaboured steer; etc.
> Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

A similar graceful and moral saying inculcates an acknowledgment of gratitude for the past favours which we have enjoyed when we come to the close of the day or the close of life—

(or dorais). *Deoch*, a drink; *an*, of the; *doruis* or *dorais*, possessive case of dorus or doras, a door.

Ruse[1] *the fair day at e'en.*

But a very learned and esteemed friend has suggested another reading of this proverb, in accordance with the celebrated saying of Solon (Arist. Eth. N. I. 10): Κατὰ Σόλωνα χρεὼν τέλος ὁρᾶν—Do not praise the fairness of the day *till* evening; do not call the life happy *till* you have seen the close; or, in other matters, do not boast that all is well till you have conducted your undertaking to a prosperous end.

Let him tak a spring on his ain fiddle. Spoken of a foolish and unreasonable person, as if to say, "We will for the present allow him to have his own way." Bailie Nicol Jarvie quotes the proverb with great bitterness, when he warns his opponent that *his* time for triumph will come ere long,—"Aweel, aweel, sir, you're welcome to a tune on your ain fiddle; but see if I dinna gar ye dance till 't afore it's dune."

The kirk is meikle, but ye may say mass in ae end o't; or, as I have received it in another form, "If we canna preach in the kirk, we can sing mass in the quire." This intimates, where something is alleged to be too much, that you need take no more than what you have need for. I heard the proverb used in this sense by Sir Walter Scott at his own table. His son had complained of some quaighs which Sir Walter had produced for a dram after dinner, that they were too large. His answer was, "Well, Walter, as my good mother used to say, if the kirk is ower big, just sing mass in the quire." Here is another reference to kirk and quire—*He rives*[2] *the kirk to theik*[3] *the quire.* Spoken of unprofitable persons, who, in the English proverb, "rob Peter to pay Paul."

The king's errand may come the cadger's gate yet. A great man may need the service of a very mean one.

The maut is aboon the meal. His liquor has done more for him than his meat. The man is drunk.

[1] Praise. [2] Tears. [3] Thatch.

Mak a kirk and a mill o't. Turn a thing to any purpose you like; or rather, spoken sarcastically, Take it, and make the best of it.

Like a sow playing on a trump. No image could be well more incongruous than a pig performing on a Jew's harp.

Mair by luck than gude guiding. His success is due to his fortunate circumstances, rather than to his own discretion.

He's not a man to ride the water wi'. A common Scottish saying to express you cannot trust such an one in trying times. May have arisen from the districts where fords abounded, and the crossing them was dangerous.

He rides on the riggin' o' the kirk. The riggin being the top of the roof, the proverb used to be applied to those who carried their zeal for church matters to the extreme point.

Leal heart never leed, well expresses that an honest loyal disposition will scorn, under all circumstances, to tell a falsehood.

A common Scottish proverb, *Let that flee stick to the wa'*, has an obvious meaning,—"Say nothing more on that subject." But the derivation is not obvious.[1] In like manner, the meaning of *He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar*, is clearly that if a man is obstinate, and bent upon his own dangerous course, he must take it. But why Cupar? and whether is it the Cupar of Angus or the Cupar of Fife?

Kindness creeps where it canna gang, prettily expresses that where love can do little, it will do that little though it cannot do more.

In my part of the country a ridiculous addition used to be made to the common Scottish saying, *Mony a thing's*

[1] It has been suggested, and with much reason, that the reference is to a flee sticking on a wet or a newly painted wall; this is corroborated by the addition in Rob Roy, "When the dirt's dry, it will rub out," which seems to point out the meaning and derivation of the proverb.

made for the pennie, i.e., many contrivances are thought of to get money. The addition is, "As the old woman said when she saw a black man,"—taking it for granted that he was an ingenious and curious piece of mechanism made for profit.

Bluid is thicker than water, is a proverb which has a marked Scottish aspect, as meant to vindicate those family predilections to which, as a nation, we are supposed to be rather strongly inclined.

There's aye water where the stirkie[1] *drouns.* Where certain effects are produced, there must be some cause at work—a proverb used to shew that a universal popular suspicion as to an obvious effect must be laid in truth.

Better a finger aff than aye waggin'. This proverb I remember as a great favourite with many Scotch people. Better experience the worst, than have an evil always pending.

Cadgers are aye cracking o' crook-saddles[2] has a very Scottish aspect, and signifies that professional men are very apt to talk too much of their professions.

As sure's deeth. A common Scotch proverbial expression to signify either the truth or certainty of a fact, or to pledge the speaker to a performance of his promise. In the latter sense an amusing illustration of faith in the superior obligation of this asseveration to any other, is recorded in the *Eglinton Papers.*[3] The Earl one day found a boy climbing up a tree, and called him to come down. The boy declined, because, he said, the Earl would thrash him. His Lordship pledged his honour that he would not do so. The boy replied, "I dinna ken onything about your honour, but if ye say as sure's deeth, I'll come doun."

Proverbs are sometimes local in their application.

The men o' the Mearns manna do mair than they may.

[1] A young bullock. [2] Saddle for supporting panniers.
[3] Vol. I., page 134.

Even the men of Kincardineshire can only do their utmost—a proverb intended to be highly complimentary to the powers of the men of that county.

I'll mak Cathkin's covenant with you, Let abee for let abee. This is a local saying quoted often in Hamilton. The laird of that property had—very unlike the excellent family who have now possessed it for more than a century—been addicted to intemperance. One of his neighbours, in order to frighten him on his way home from his evening potations, disguised himself in a very dark night, and personating the devil, claimed a title to carry him off as his rightful property. Contrary to all expectation, however, the laird shewed fight, and was about to commence the onslaught, when a parley was proposed, and the issue was "Cathkin's covenant, Let abee for let abee."

When the castle of Stirling gets a hat, the carse of Corntown pays for that. This is a local proverbial saying; the meaning is, that when the clouds descend so low as to envelop Stirling Castle, a deluge of rain may be expected in the adjacent country.

I will conclude this notice of our proverbial reminiscences, by adding a cluster of Scottish proverbs, selected from an excellent article on the general subject in the *North British Review* of February, 1858. The reviewer designates these as "broader in their mirth, and more caustic in their tone," than the moral proverbial expressions of the Spanish and Italian :—

A blate [1] *cat maks a proud mouse.*
Better a toom [2] *house than an ill tenant.*
Jouk [3] *and let the jaw* [4] *gang by.*
Mony ane speers the gate [5] *he kens fu' weel.*
The tod [6] *ne'er sped better than when he gaed his ain errand.*
A wilfu' man should be unco wise.
He that has a meikle nose thinks ilka ane speaks o't.
He that teaches himsel has a fule for his maister.
It's an ill cause that the lawyer thinks shame o'.
Lippen [7] *to me, but look to yourself.*

[1] Shy. [2] Empty. [3] Stoop down. [4] Wave. [5] The way. [6] Fox. [7] Trust to.

Mair whistle than woo, as the souter said when shearing the soo.
Ye gae far about seeking the nearest.
Ye'll no sell your hen in a rainy day.
Ye'll mend when ye grow better.
Ye're nae chicken for a' your cheepin'. [1]

I have now adduced quite sufficient specimens to convince those who may not have given attention to the subject, how much of wisdom, knowledge of life, and good feeling, are contained in these aphorisms which compose the mass of our Scottish proverbial sayings. No doubt, to many of my younger readers, proverbs are little known, and to all they are becoming more and more matters of reminiscence. I am quite convinced that much of the old quaint and characteristic Scottish talk which we are now endeavouring to recall, depended on a happy use of those abstracts of moral sentiment. And this feeling will be confirmed when we call to mind how often those of the old Scottish school of character whose conversation we have ourselves admired, had most largely availed themselves of the use of its *proverbial* philosophy.

In connection with this division of our subject, the present seems to be a proper place for introducing the mention of a Scottish peculiarity, viz., that of naming individuals from lands which have been possessed long by the family, or frequently from the landed estates which they acquire. The use of this mode of discriminating individuals in the Highland districts is sufficiently obvious. Where the inhabitants of a whole country side are Campbells, or Frasers, or Gordons, nothing could be more convenient than addressing the individuals of each clan by the name of his estate. Indeed some years ago, any other designation, as Mr. Campbell, Mr. Fraser, would have been resented as an indignity. Their consequence sprung from their possession. [2] But all this is fast wearing

[1] Chirping.

[2] Even in Forfarshire, where Carnegies abound, we had Craigo, Balnamoon, Pittarrow, etc.

away. The estates of old families have often changed hands, and Highlanders are most unwilling to give the names of old properties to new proprietors. The custom, however, lingers amongst us, in the northern districts especially. Farms also used to give their names to the tenants.[1] I can recall an amusing instance of this practice belonging to my early days. The oldest recollections I have are connected with the name, the figure, the sayings and doings, of the old cowherd at Fasque in my father's time; his name was Boggy, *i.e.*, his ordinary appellation; his true name was Sandy Anderson. But he was called Boggy from the circumstance of having once held a wretched farm on Deeside named Boggendreep. He had long left it, and been unfortunate in it, but the name never left him,—he was Boggy to his grave. The territorial appellation used to be reckoned complimentary, and more respectful than Mr. or any higher title to which the individual might be entitled. I recollect, in my brother's time, at Fasque, his showing off some of his home stock to Mr. Williamson, the Aberdeen butcher. They came to a fine stot, and Sir Alexander said, with some appearance of boast, "I was offered twenty guineas for that ox." "Indeed, Fasque," said Williamson, "ye should hae steekit your neive upo' that."

Sir Walter Scott had marked in his diary a territorial greeting of two proprietors which had amused him much. The laird of Kilspindie had met the laird of Tannachy-Tulloch, and the following compliments passed between them:—"Ye're maist obedient hummil servant, Tannachy-Tulloch." To which the reply was, "Your nain man, Kilspindie."

In proportion as we advance towards the Highland district this custom of distinguishing clans or races,

[1] This custom is still in use in Galloway, and 'Challoch,' 'Eschonchan,' 'Tonderghie,' 'Balsalloch,' and 'Drummorral,' etc., etc., appear regularly at kirk and market.

and marking them out according to the district they occupied, became more apparent. There was the Glengarry country, the Fraser country, the Gordon country, etc. etc. These names carried also with them certain moral features as characteristic of each division. Hence the following anecdote :—The morning litany of an old laird of Cultoquhey, when he took his morning draught at the cauld well, was in these terms—"Frae the ire o' the Drummonds, the pride o' the Græmes, the greed o' the Campbells, and the wind o' the Murrays, guid Lord deliver us." On being reproved by the Duke of Athole for taking such liberties with noble names, his answer was—"There, my lord, there's the wind o' the Murrays!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

ON SCOTTISH STORIES OF WIT AND HUMOUR

THE portion of our subject, which we proposed under the head of "Reminiscences of Scottish Stories of Wit and Humour," yet remains to be considered. This is closely connected with the question of Scottish dialect and expressions; indeed, on some points hardly separable, as the wit, to a great extent, proceeds from the quaint and picturesque modes of expressing it. But here we are met by a difficulty. On high authority it has been declared that no such thing as wit exists among us. What has no existence can have no change. We cannot be said to have lost a quality. which we never possessed. Many of my readers are no doubt familiar with what Sydney Smith declared on this point, and certainly on the question of wit he must be considered an authority. He used to say (I am almost ashamed to repeat it), "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit, which prevails occasionally in the north, and which, under the name of WUT, is so infinitely distressing to people of good tastes, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals." Strange language to use of a country which has produced Smollett, Burns, Scott, Galt, and Wilson, all remarkable for the humour diffused through their writings. Indeed, we may fairly ask, have they equals in this respect amongst English writers? Charles Lamb had the same notion, or, I should rather say, the same prejudice, about Scottish people not being accessible to wit; and he tells a story of what happened to himself in corroboration of the opinion. He had been asked to a

party, and one object of the invitation had been to meet a son of Burns. When he arrived, Mr. Burns had not made his appearance, and in the course of conversation regarding the family of the poet, Lamb, in his lack-a-daisical kind of manner, said, "I wish it had been the father instead of the son;" upon which four Scotchmen present with one voice exclaimed, "That's impossible, for *he's dead.*"[1] Now, there will be dull men and matter-of-fact men everywhere who do not take a joke or enter into a jocular allusion; but surely, as a general remark, this is far from being a natural quality of our country. Sydney Smith and Charles Lamb say so. But at the risk of being considered presumptuous, I will say I think them entirely mistaken; I should say that there was, on the contrary, a strong *connection* between the Scottish temperament, and, call it if you like, humour if it is not wit. And what is the difference? My readers need not be afraid that they are to be led through a labyrinth of metaphysical distinctions between wit and humour. I have read Dr. Campbell's dissertation on the difference in his philosophy of rhetoric, I have read S. Smith's own two lectures, but I confess I am not much the wiser. Professors of rhetoric, no doubt, must have such discussions, but when you wish to be amused by the thing itself, it is somewhat disappointing to be presented with metaphysical analysis. It is like instituting an examination of the glass and cork of a champagne bottle, and a chemical testing of the wine. In the very process the volatile and sparkling draught, which was to delight the palate, has become like ditch water, vapid and dead. What I mean is, that, call it wit or humour, or what you please, there is a school of Scottish pleasantry, amusing and characteristic beyond

[1] After all, the remark may not have been so absurd then as it appears now. Burns had not been long dead, nor was he then so noted a character as he is now. The Scotchmen might really have supposed a Southerner unacquainted with the *fact* of the poet's death.

all other. Don't think of *analysing* its nature, or the qualities of which it is composed; enjoy its quaint and amusing flow of oddity and fun; as we may, for instance, suppose it to have flowed on that eventful night so joyously described by Burns:—

> "The souter tauld his queerest stories,
> The landlord's laugh was ready chorus."

Or we may think of the delight it gave the good Mr. Balwhidder, when he tells, in his *Annals of the Parish*, of some such story, that it was a "jocosity that was just a kittle to hear." When I speak of changes in such Scottish humour which have taken place, I refer to a particular sort of humour, and I speak of the sort of feeling that belongs to Scottish pleasantry,—which is sly, and cheery, and pawky. It is, undoubtedly, a humour that depends a good deal upon the vehicle in which the story is conveyed. If, as we have said, our quaint dialect is passing away, and our national eccentric points of character, we must expect to find much of the peculiar humour allied with them to have passed away also. In other departments of wit and repartee, and acute hits at men and things, Scotchmen (whatever S. Smith may have said to the contrary) are equal to their neighbours, and, so far as I know, may have gained rather than lost. But this peculiar humour of which I now speak has not, in our day, the scope and development which were permitted to it by the former generation. Where the tendency exists, the exercise of it is kept down by the usages and feelings of society. For examples of it (in its full force at any rate), we must go back to a race who are departed. One remark, however, has occurred to me in regard to the specimens we have of this kind of humour, viz., that they do not always proceed from the wit or the cleverness of any of the individuals concerned in them.

The amusement comes from the circumstances, from the concurrence or combination of the ideas, and in many

cases from the mere expressions which describe the facts. The humour of the narrative is unquestionable, and yet no one has tried to be humorous. In short, it is the *Scottishness* that gives the zest. The same ideas differently expounded might have no point at all. There is, for example, something highly original in the notions of celestial mechanics entertained by an honest Scottish Fife lass regarding the theory of comets. Having occasion to go out after dark, and having observed the brilliant comet then visible (1858), she ran in with breathless haste to the house, calling on her fellow-servants to "Come oot and see a new star that hasna got its tail cuttit aff yet!" Exquisite astronomical speculation! Stars, like puppies, are born with tails, and in due time have them docked. Take an example of a story where there is no display of any one's wit or humour, and yet it is a good story, and one can't exactly say why:—An English traveller had gone on a fine Highland road so long, without having seen an indication of fellow-travellers, that he became astonished at the solitude of the country; and no doubt before the Highlands were so much frequented as they are in our time, the roads had a very striking aspect of solitariness. Our traveller at last coming up to an old man breaking stones, he asked him if there was any traffic on this road—was it at *all* frequented? "Ay," he said, "it's no ill at that; there was a cadger body yestreen, and there's yoursell the day." No English version of the story could have half such amusement, or have so quaint a character. An answer, even still more characteristic, is recorded to have been given by a countryman to a traveller. Being doubtful of his way, he inquired if he were on the right road to Dunkeld. With some of his national inquisitiveness about strangers, the countryman asked his inquirer where he came from. Offended at the liberty, as he considered it, he sharply reminded the man that where he came from was nothing to him; but

all the answer he got, was the quiet rejoinder, "Indeed, it's just as little to me whar ye'r gaen." A friend has told me of an answer highly characteristic of this dry and unconcerned quality which he heard given to a fellow-traveller. A gentleman sitting opposite to him in the stage-coach at Berwick, complained bitterly that the cushion on which he sat was quite wet. On looking up to the roof he saw a hole through which the rain descended copiously, and at once accounted for the mischief. He called for the coachman, and in great wrath reproached him with the evil under which he suffered, and pointed to the hole which was the cause of it. All the satisfaction, however, that he got was the quiet unmoved reply, "Ay, mony a ane has complained o' *that* hole." Another anecdote I heard from a gentleman, who vouched for the truth, which is just a case where the narrative has its humour, not from the wit which is displayed, but from that dry matter-of-fact view of things peculiar to some of our countrymen. The friend of my informant was walking in a street of Perth, when, to his horror, he saw a workman fall from a roof where he was mending slates, right upon the pavement. By extraordinary good fortune he was not killed, and, on the gentleman going up to his assistance, and exclaiming with much excitement, "God bless me, are you much hurt?" all the answer he got was the cool rejoinder, "On the contrary, sir." A similar matter-of-fact answer was made by one of the old race of Montrose humorists. He was coming out of church, and in the press of the kirk *skailing*, a young man thoughtlessly trod on the old gentleman's toe, which was tender with corns. He hastened to apologise, saying, "I am very sorry, sir; I beg your pardon." The only acknowledgment of which was the dry answer, "And ye've as muckle need, sir."

From a first-rate *Highland* authority I have been supplied with the following clever and crushing reply to what was

intended as a sarcastic compliment and a smart saying :—

About the beginning of the present century, the then Campbell, of Combie, on Loch Awe side, in Argyleshire, was a man of extraordinary character, and of great physical strength, and such swiftness of foot that it is said he could "catch the best *tup* on the hill." He also looked upon himself as a "pretty man," though in this he was singular; also, it was more than whispered that the laird was not remarkable for his principles of honesty. There also lived in the same district a Miss MacNabb of Bar-a-Chaistril, a lady who, before she had passed the zenith of life, had never been remarkable for her beauty—the contrary even had passed into a proverb, while she was in her teens; but, to counterbalance this defect in external qualities, nature had endowed her with great benevolence, while she was renowned for her probity. One day the Laird of Combie, who piqued himself on his *bon-mots*, was, as frequently happened, a guest of Miss MacNabb's, and after dinner several toasts had gone round as usual, Combie addressed his hostess, and requested an especial bumper, insisting on all the guests to fill to the brim. He then rose, and said, addressing himself to Miss MacNabb, "I propose the old Scottish toast of 'Honest men and *bonnie* lasses'" and, bowing to the hostess, he resumed his seat. The lady returned his bow with her usual amiable smile, and, taking up her glass, replied, "Weel, Combie, I am sure *we* may drink that, for it will neither apply to *you* nor *me*."

An amusing example of a quiet cool view of a pecuniary transaction happened to my father whilst doing the business of the rent day. He was receiving sums of money from the tenants in succession. After looking over a bundle of notes which he had just received from one of them, a well-known character, he said in banter, "James, the notes are not correct." To which the farmer, who

was much of a humorist, dryly answered, "I dinna ken what they may be *noo;* but they were a' richt afore ye had your fingers in amang 'em." An English farmer would hardly have spoken thus to his landlord. The Duke of Buccleuch told me an answer very quaintly Scotch, given to his grandmother by a farmer of the old school. A dinner was given to some tenantry of the vast estates of the family, in the time of Duke Henry. His Duchess (the last descendant of the Dukes of Montague) always appeared at table on such occasion, and did the honours with that mixture of dignity and of affable kindness for which she was so remarkable. Abundant hospitality was shewn to all the guests. The Duchess having observed one of the tenants supplied with boiled beef from a noble round, proposed that he should add a supply of cabbage; on his declining, the Duchess good-humouredly remarked, "Why, boiled beef and greens seem so naturally to go together, I wonder you don't take it." To which the honest farmer objected, "Ay, but your Grace maun alloo it's a vara *windy* vegetable," in delicate allusion to the flatulent quality of the esculent. Similar to this was the naïve answer of a farmer on the occasion of a rent day. The lady of the house asked him if he would take some *rhubarb* tart, "Mony thanks, mem, I dinna need it."

Amongst the lower orders, humour is found, occasionally, very rich in mere children, and I recollect a remarkable illustration of this early native humour occurring in a family in Forfarshire, where I used, in former days, to be very intimate. A wretched woman, who used to traverse the country as a beggar or tramp, left a poor, half-starved little girl by the road side, near the house of my friends. Always ready to assist the unfortunate, they took charge of the child, and as she grew a little older, they began to give her some education, and taught her to read. She soon made some progress in reading

the Bible, and the native odd humour, of which we speak, began soon to shew itself. On reading the passage, which began, "Then David rose," etc,, the child stopped, and looked up knowingly, to say, "I ken wha that was," and on being asked what she could mean, she confidently said, "That's David Rowse the pleuchman." And again reading the passage where the words occur, "He took Paul's girdle," the child said with much confidence, "I ken what he took that for," and on being asked to explain, replied at once, "To bake's bannocks on;" "girdle" being, in the north, the name for the iron plate hung over the fire, for making oat cakes or bannocks.

A kind correspondent has sent me, from personal knowledge, an admirable pendant to these stories of Scottish child acuteness and shrewd observation. A young lady friend of his, resident in a part of Ayrshire rather remote from any very satisfactory administration of the Gospel, is in the habit of collecting the children of the neighbourhood on Sundays at the "big house," for religious instruction. On one occasion, the class had repeated the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, which contains these lines—

> "Give us this day our daily bread,
> And raiment *fit* provide."

There being no question as to what "daily bread" was, the teacher proceeded to ask; "What do you understand by 'raiment fit,' or, as we might say, 'fit raiment?'" For a short time the class remained puzzled at the question; but at last one little girl sung out "stockings and shune." The child knew that "fit," was Scotch for feet, so her natural explanation of the phrase was equivalent to "feet raiment," or "stockings and shune," as she termed it.

To a distinguished member of the Church of Scotland I am indebted for an excellent story of quaint child humour, which he had from the lips of an old woman

who related the story of herself—When a girl of eight years of age, she was taken by her grandmother to church. The parish minister was not only a long preacher, but, as the custom was, delivered two sermons on the Sabbath day without any interval, and thus saved the parishioners the two journeys to church. Elizabeth was sufficiently wearied before the close of the first discourse, but when, after singing and prayer, the good minister opened the Bible, read a second text, and prepared to give a second sermon, the young girl, being both tired and hungry, lost all patience, and cried out to her grandmother, to the no small amusement of those who were so near as to hear her, "Come awa, granny, and gang hame; this is a lang grace and nae meat."

A most amusing account of child humour used to be narrated by an old Mr. Campbell of Jura, who told the story of his own son. It seems the boy was much spoilt by indulgence. In fact, the parents were scarce able to refuse him anything he demanded. He was in the drawing-room on one occasion when dinner was announced, and on being ordered up to the nursery he insisted on going down to dinner with the company. His mother was for refusal, but the child persevered, and kept saying, "If I dinna gang, I'll tell thon." His father then, for peace sake, let him go. So he went and sat at table by his mother. When he found every one getting soup and himself omitted, he demanded soup, and repeated, "If I dinna get it, I'll tell thon." Well, soup was given, and various other things yielded to his importunities, to which he always added the usual threat of "telling thon." At last, when it came to wine, his mother stood firm, and positively refused, as "a bad thing for little boys," and so on. He then became more vociferous than ever about "telling thon;" and as still he was refused, he declared, "now I will tell thon," and at last roared out, "*Ma new breeks were made oot o' the auld curtains!*"

A facetious and acute friend who rather leans to the S. Smith view of Scottish wit, declares that all our humorous stories are about lairds, and about lairds who are drunk. Of such stories there are certainly not a few. One of the best belongs to my part of the country, and to many persons I should perhaps apologise for introducing it at all. The story has been told of various parties and localities, but no doubt the genuine laird was a laird of Balnamoon (pronounced in the country Bonnymoon), and that the locality was a wild tract of land, not far from his place, called Munrimmon Moor. Balnamoon had been dining out in the neighbourhood, where by mistake they had put down to him after dinner cherry brandy, instead of port wine, his usual beverage. The rich flavour and strength so pleased him, that having tasted it, he would have nothing else. On rising from table, therefore, the laird would be more affected by his drink than if he had taken his ordinary allowance of port. His servant Harry, or Hairy,[1] was to drive him home in a gig or whisky, as it was called, the usual open carriage of the time. On crossing the moor, however, whether from greater exposure to the blast, or from the laird's unsteadiness of head, his hat and wig came off and fell upon the ground. Harry got out to pick them up and restore them to his master. The laird was satisfied with the hat, but demurred at the wig. "It's no my wig, Hairy, lad; it's no my wig," and refused to have anything to do with it. Hairy lost his patience, and, anxious to get home, remonstrated with his master, "Ye'd better tak it, sir, for there's nae waile o' wigs on Munrimmon Moor." The humour of the argument is exquisite, putting to the laird in his unreasonable objection, the sly insinuation that in such a locality, if he did

[1] In corroboration of the genuineness and authenticity of the story, I am assured by a correspondent that he knows the name of the servant was *not* Hairy; but I have mislaid the reference.

not take *this* wig, he was not likely to find another. Then, what a rich expression, "waile o' wigs." In English what is it? "A choice of perukes," which is nothing comparable to the "waile o' wigs." I ought to mention also an amusing sequel to the story, viz., in what happened after the affair of the wig had been settled, and the laird had consented to return home. When the whisky drove up to the door, Hairy, sitting in front, told the servant who came to "tak out the laird." No laird was to be seen; and it appeared that he had fallen out on the moor without Hairy observing it. Of course, they went back, and, picking him up, brought him safe home. A neighbouring laird having called a few days after, and having referred to the accident, Balnamoon quietly added, "Indeed, I maun hae a lume[1] that'll *had in*."

The laird of Balnamoon was a truly eccentric character. He joined with his drinking propensities a great zeal for the Episcopal Church, the service of which he read to his own family with much solemnity and earnestness of manner. Two gentlemen, one of them a stranger to the country, having called pretty early one Sunday morning, Balnamoon invited them to dinner, and as they accepted the invitation, they remained and joined in the forenoon devotional exercises conducted by Balnamoon himself. The stranger was much impressed with the laird's performance of the service, and during a walk which they took before dinner mentioned to his friend how highly he esteemed the religious deportment of their host. The gentleman said nothing, but smiled to himself at the scene which he anticipated was to follow. After dinner Balnamoon set himself, according to the custom of old hospitable Scottish hosts, to make his guests as drunk as possible. The result was, that the party spent the evening in a riotous debauch, and were carried to bed by the servants at a late hour. Next day, when they had

[1] A vessel.

taken leave and left the house, the gentleman who had introduced his friend asked him what he thought of their entertainer—"Why, really," he replied, with evident astonishment, "sic a speat o' praying, and sic a speat o' drinking, I never knew in the whole course of my life."

Lady Dalhousie, mother, I mean, of the late distinguished Marquis of Dalhousie, used to tell a characteristic anecdote of her day. But here, on mention of the name Christian, Countess of Dalhousie, may I pause a moment to recall the memory of one who was a very remarkable person? She was, for many years, to me and mine, a sincere and true and valuable friend. By an awful dispensation of God's providence, her death happened *instantaneously* under my roof in 1839. Lady Dalhousie was eminently distinguished for a fund of the most varied knowledge, for a clear and powerful judgment, for acute observation, a kind heart, a brilliant wit. The story was thus:—A Scottish judge, somewhat in the predicament of the Laird of Balnamoon, had dined at Coalstoun with her father, Charles Brown, an advocate, and son of George Brown, who sat in the Supreme Court as a judge with the title of Lord Coalstoun. The party had been convivial, as we know parties of the highest legal characters often were in those days. When breaking up and going to the drawing-room, one of them, not seeing his way very clearly, stepped out of the dining-room window, which was open to the summer air. The ground at Coalstoun sloping off from the house behind, the worthy judge got a great fall, and rolled down the bank. He contrived, however, as tipsy men generally do, to regain his legs, and was able to reach the drawing-room. The first remark he made was an innocent remonstrance with his friend the host, "Od, Charlie Brown, what gars ye hae sic lang steps to your *front* door?"

On Deeside, where many original stories had their origin, I recollect hearing several of an excellent and

worthy, but very simple-minded man, the Laird of Craigmyle. On one occasion, when the beautiful and clever Jane, Duchess of Gordon, was scouring through the country, intent upon some of those electioneering schemes which often occupied her fertile imagination and active energies, she came to call at Craigmyle, and having heard that the laird was making bricks on the property, for the purpose of building a new garden wall, with her usual tact she opened the subject, and kindly asked, "Well, Mr. Gordon, and how do your bricks come on?" Good Craigmyle's thoughts were much occupied with a new leather portion of his dress, which had been lately constructed, so, looking down on his nether garments, he said in pure Aberdeen dialect, "Muckle obleeged to yer Grace, the breeks war sum ticht at first, but they are deeing weel eneuch noo." The last laird of Macnab, before the clan finally broke up and emigrated to Canada, was a well-known character in the country, and being poor, used to ride about on a most wretched horse, which gave occasion to many gibes at his expense. The laird was in the constant habit of riding up from the country to attend the Musselburgh races. A young wit, by way of playing him off on the race-course, asked him in a contemptuous tone, "Is that the same horse you had last year, Laird?" "Na," said the laird, brandishing his whip in the interrogator's face in so emphatic a manner as to preclude further questioning, "Na; but it's the same *whup*." In those days, as might be expected, people were not nice in expressions of their dislike to persons and measures. If there be not more charity in society, there is certainly more courtesy. I have, from a friend, an anecdote illustrative of this remark, in regard to feelings exercised towards an unpopular laird. In the neighbourhood of Banff, in Forfarshire, the seat of a very ancient family of the Ramsays, lived a proprietor who bore the appellation of Corb, from the name of his estate. The family has passed away and

its property merged in Banff. This laird was intensely disliked in the neighbourhood. Sir George Ramsay was, on the other hand, universally popular and respected. On one occasion, Sir George, in passing a morass, in his own neighbourhood, had missed the road and fallen into a bog to an alarming depth. To his great relief, he saw a passenger coming along the path, which was at no great distance. He called loudly for his help, but the man took no notice. Poor Sir George felt himself sinking, and redoubled his cries for assistance; all at once the passenger rushed forward, carefully extricated him from his perilous position, and politely apologised for his first neglect of his appeal, adding, as his reason, "Indeed, Sir George, I thought it was Corb!" evidently meaning that *had* it been Corb, he must have taken his chance for him.

In Lanarkshire, there lived a sma' sma' laird named Hamilton, who was noted for his eccentricity. On one occasion, a neighbour waited on him, and requested his name as an accommodation to a bit bill for twenty pounds at three months' date, which led to the following characteristic and truly Scottish colloquy:—"Na, na, I canna do that." "What for no, laird, ye hae dune the same thing for ithers." "Aye, aye, Tammas, but there's wheels within wheels ye ken naething about; I canna do't." "It's a sma' affair to refuse me, laird." "Weel, ye see, Tammas, if I was to pit my name till't, ye wad get the siller frae the bank, and when the time came round, ye wadna be ready, and I wad hae to pay't; sae then you and me wad quarrel, sae we mae just as weel quarrel the noo, as lang's the siller's in ma pouch." On one occasion, Hamilton having business with the late Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace, the Duke politely asked him to lunch. A liveried servant waited upon them, and was most assiduous in his attentions to the Duke and his guest. At last our eccentric friend lost patience, and looking at the servant, addressed him thus, "What the

deil for are ye dance, dancing, about the room that gait; can ye no draw in your chair and sit down, I'm sure there's *plenty on the table for three.*"

Of another laird whom I heard often spoken of in old times, an anecdote was told strongly Scotch. Our friend had much difficulty (as many worthy lairds have had), in meeting the claims of those two woful periods of the year called with us in Scotland the "tarmes." He had been employing for some time as workman a stranger from the south on some house repairs, of the not uncommon name in England of Christmas. His servant early one morning called out at the laird's door in great excitement that "Christmas had run away, and nobody knew where he had gone." He turned in his bed with the earnest ejaculation, "I only wish he had taken Whitsunday and Martinmas along with him." I do not know a better illustration of quiet, shrewd, and acute Scottish humour than the following little story, which an esteemed correspondent mentions having heard from his father when a boy, relating to a former Duke of Athole, who had *no family of his own*, and whom he mentions as having remembered very well:—He met, one morning, one of his cottars or gardeners, whose wife he knew to be in the *hopeful way*; asking him "How Marget was the day," the man replied, that she had that morning given him twins. Upon which the Duke said,—"Weel, Donald, ye ken the Almighty never sends bairns without the meat." "That may be, your Grace," said Donald; "but whiles I think that Providence maks a mistake in thae matters, and sends the bairns to ae hoose and the meat to anither!" The Duke took the hint, and sent him a cow with calf the following morning.

I have heard of an amusing scene between a laird celebrated for his saving propensities and a wandering sort of Eddie Ochiltree, a well-known itinerant, who lived by his wits and what he could pick up in his rounds

amongst the houses of lairds and farmers. One thrifty laird having seen him sit down near his own gate to examine the contents of his poke or wallet, conjectured that he had come from the house, and so he drew near to see what he had carried off. As he was keenly investigating the mendicant's spoils, his quick eye detected some bones on which there remained more meat than should have been allowed to leave his kitchen. Accordingly he pounced upon the bones, and declared he had been robbed, and insisted on his returning to the house and giving back the spoil. The beggar was, however, prepared for the attack, and sturdily defended his property, boldly asserting, "Na, na, laird, thae are no Todbrae banes; thae are Inch-Brye banes, and nane o' your honour's,"—meaning that he had received these bones at the house of a neighbour of a more liberal character. But the beggar's professional discrimination between the bones of the two mansions, and his pertinacious defence of his own property, would have been most amusing to a bystander.

I have, however, a reverse story, in which the beggar is quietly silenced by the proprietor. A noble lord, some generations back, well known for his frugal habits, had just picked up a small copper coin in his own avenue, and had been observed by one of the itinerating mendicant race, who, grudging the transfer of the piece into the peer's pocket, exclaimed, "O, gie't to me, my lord;" to which the quiet answer was, "Na, na; fin' a fardin for yersell, puir body."

There are always pointed anecdotes against houses wanting in a liberal and hospitable expenditure in Scotland. Thus, we have heard of a master leaving such a mansion, and taxing his servant with being drunk, which he had too often been after country visits. On this occasion, however, he was innocent of the charge, for he had not had the *opportunity* to transgress. So, when his

master asserted, "Jemmy, you are drunk!" Jemmy very quietly answered, "Indeed, sir, I wish I wur." At another mansion, notorious for scanty fare, a gentleman was inquiring of the gardener about a dog which some time ago he had given to the laird. The gardener showed him a lank greyhound, on which the gentleman said,—"No, no; the dog I gave your master was a mastiff, not a greyhound;" to which the gardener quietly answered, "Indeed, ony dog micht sune become a greyhound by stopping here."

From a friend and near relative, a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, I used to hear many characteristic stories. He had a curious vein of this sort of humour in himself, besides what he brought out of others. One of his peculiarities was a mortal antipathy to the whole French nation, whom he frequently abused in no measured terms. At the same time he had great relish of a glass of claret, which he considered the prince of all social beverages. So he usually finished off his antigallican tirades with the reservation, "But the bodies brew the braw drink." He lived amongst his own people, and knew well the habits and peculiarities of a race gone by. He had many stories connected with the pastoral relation between minister and people, and all such stories are curious, not merely for their amusement, but from the illustration they afford us of that peculiar Scottish humour which we are now describing. He had himself, when a very young boy, before he came up to the Edinburgh High School, been at the parochial school where he resided, and which, like many others at that period, had a considerable reputation for the skill and scholarship of the master. He used to describe school scenes rather different, I suspect, from school scenes in our day. One boy, on coming late, exclaimed that the cause had been a regular pitched battle between his parents, with the details of which he amused his

school-fellows, and he described the battle in vivid and Scottish Homeric terms, "And eh, as they faucht and they faucht," adding, however, with much complacency, "but my minnie dang, she did tho'."

There was a style of conversation and quaint modes of communication between ministers and their people at that time, which, I suppose, would seem strange to the present generation; as, for example, I recollect a conversation between this relative and one of his parishioners of this description. It had been a very wet and unpromising autumn. The minister met a certain Janet of his flock, and accosted her very kindly. He remarked, "Bad prospect for the har'st (harvest), Janet, this wet." Janet—"Indeed, sir, I've seen as muckle as that there'll be nae har'st the year." Minister—"Na, Janet, deil as muckle as that 't ever ye saw."

As I have said, he was a clergyman of the Established Church, and had many stories about ministers and people, arising out of his own pastoral experience, or the experience of friends and neighbours. He was much delighted with the not very refined rebuke which one of his own farmers had given to a young minister who had for some Sundays occupied his pulpit. The young man dined with the farmer in the afternoon when services were over, and his appetite was so sharp, that he thought it necessary to apologise to his host for eating so substantial a dinner—"You see," he said, "I am always very hungry after preaching." The old gentleman, not much admiring the youth's pulpit ministrations, having heard this apology two or three times, at last replied sarcastically, "Indeed, sir, I'm no surprised at it, considering the trash that comes aff your stamach in the morning." There was a story for which he had names of place and persons, but I forget whether it was of his own experience. I think it was his own; at any rate it was thus:—A lad had come for examination, previous to his receiving his

first communion. The pastor, knowing that his young friend was not very profound in his theology, and not wishing to discourage him, or keep him from the table unless compelled to do so, began by asking him what he thought a safe question, and what would give him confidence. So he took the old Testament, and asked him, in reference to the Mosaic Law, how many commandments there were. After a little thought he put his answer in a modest form of a supposition, and replied, cautiously, "Aiblins[1] a hunner." The clergyman was vexed, and told him such ignorance was intolerable, that he could not proceed in examination, and that the youth must wait and learn more; so he went away. On returning home he met a friend on his way to the manse, and, on learning that he, too, was going to the minister for examination, shrewdly asked him, "Weel, what will ye say noo if the minister speers hoo mony commandments there are?" "Say! why, I shall say ten to be sure." To which the other rejoined, with great triumph, "Ten! Try ye him wi' ten! I tried him wi' a hunner, and he wasna satisfeed."

What I *wish* to keep in view is, to distinguish anecdotes which are amusing on account merely of the expressions used, from those which have real wit and humour *combined*, with the purely Scottish vehicle in which they are conveyed.

Of this class I could not have a better specimen to commence with than the defence of the liturgy of his Church, by John Skinner of Langside, of whom previous mention has been made. It is witty and clever.

Being present at a party [I think at Lord Forbes's], where were also several ministers of the Establishment, the conversation over their wine turned, among other things, on the prayer-book. Skinner took no part in it, till one minister remarked to him, "the great faut I hae

[1] Perhaps.

to your prayer-book is, that ye use the Lord's Prayer sae aften,—ye juist mak a dishclout o't."

Skinner's rejoinder was, "Verra true! Ay, man, we mak a dishclout o't, an' we wring't, an we wring't, an' we wring't, an' the bree o't washes a' the lave o' our prayers."

No one, I think, could deny the wit of the following rejoinders.

A ruling elder of a country parish in the west of Scotland was well known in the district as a shrewd and ready-witted man. He got many a visit by persons who liked a banter, or to hear a good joke. Three young students gave him a call in order to have a little amusement at the elder's expense. On approaching him, one of them saluted him, "Well, Father Abraham, how are you to-day?" "You are wrong," said the other, "this is old Father Isaac;" "Tuts," said the third, "you are both mistaken; this is old Father Jacob." David looked at the young men, and in his own way replied, "I am neither old Father Abraham, nor old Father Isaac, nor old Father Jacob, but I am Saul, the son of Kish, seeking his father's asses, and lo! I've found three o' them."

For many years the Baptist community of Dunfermline was presided over by brothers David Dewar and James Inglis, the latter of whom has just recently gone to his reward. Brother David was a plain, honest, straightforward man, who never hesitated to express his convictions, however unpalatable they might be to others. Being elected a member of the Prison Board, he was called upon to give his vote in the choice of a chaplain from the licentiates of the Established Kirk. The party who had gained the confidence of the Board had proved rather an indifferent preacher in a charge to which he had previously been appointed; and on David being asked to signify his assent to the choice of the Board, he said, "Weel, I've no objections to the man, for I

understand he has preached a kirk toom (empty) already, and if he be as successful in the jail, he'll maybe preach it vawcant as weel."

From Mr. Inglis, clerk of the Court of Session, I have the following Scottish rejoinder :—

" I recollect my father giving a conversation between a Perthshire laird and one of his tenants. The laird's eldest son was rather a simpleton. Laird says, " I am going to send the young laird abroad." " What for ? " asked the tenant ; answered, " To see the world ; " tenant replies, " But, lordsake, Laird, will no the world see *him* ? "

An admirably humorous reply is recorded of a Scotch officer, well known and esteemed in his day for mirth and humour. Captain Innes of the Guards (usually called Jock Innes by his contemporaries) was with others getting ready for Flushing or some of those expeditions of the beginning of the great war. His commanding officer (Lord Huntly, my correspondent thinks) remonstrated about the badness of his hat, and recommended a new one.—" Na ! na ! bide a wee," said Jock ; " whare we're gain', faith there'll soon be mair hats nor *heads*."

There is an odd and original way of putting a matter sometimes in Scotch people, which is irresistibly comic, although by the persons nothing comic is intended, as for example, when in 1786 Edinburgh was illuminated on account of the recovery of George III. from severe illness—in a house where great preparation was going on for the occasion, by getting the candles fixed in tin sconces, an old nurse of the family looking on, exclaimed, " Ay, it's a braw time for the cannel makers when the king is sick, honest man ! "

Scottish farmers of the old school were a shrewd and humorous race, sometimes not indisposed to look with a little jealousy upon their younger brethren, who on their part, perhaps, showed their contempt for the old-

fashioned ways. I take the following example from the columns of the *Peterhead Sentinel*, just as it appeared —June 14, 1861 :—

"AN ANECDOTE FOR DEAN RAMSAY.—The following characteristic and amusing anecdote was communicated to us the other day by a gentleman who happened to be a party to the conversation detailed below. This gentleman was passing along a road not a hundred miles from Peterhead one day this week. Two different farms skirt the separate sides of the turnpike, one of which is rented by a farmer who cultivates his land according to the most advanced system of agriculture, and the other of which is farmed by a gentleman of the old school. Our informant met the latter worthy at the side of the turnpike opposite his neighbour's farm, and seeing a fine crop of wheat upon what appeared to be [and really was] very thin and poor land, asked—'When was that wheat sown?' 'O, I dinna ken,' replied the gentleman of the old school, with a sort of half-indifference, half-contempt. 'But isn't it strange that such a fine crop should be reared on such bad land?' asked our informant. 'O, na—nae at a'—devil thank it; a gravesteen wad gie guid bree gin ye geed it plenty o' butter!'"

But perhaps the best anecdote illustrative of the keen shrewdness of the Scottish farmer is related by Mr. Boyd in one of his charming series of papers reprinted from *Fraser's Magazine*. "A friend of mine, a country parson, on first going to his parish, resolved to farm his glebe for himself. A neighbouring farmer kindly offered the parson to plough one of his fields. The farmer said that he would send his man John with a plough and a pair of horses on a certain day. 'If ye're goin' about,' said the farmer to the clergyman, 'John will be unco' weel pleased if you speak to him, and say it's a fine day, or the like o' that; but dinna,' said the farmer, with much solemnity, 'dinna say onything to him aboot

ploughin' and sawin' ; for John,' he added, ' is a stupid body, but he has been ploughin' and sawin' all his life, and he'll see in a minute that *ye* ken naething aboot ploughin' and sawin'. And then,' said the sagacious old farmer, with extreme earnestness, ' if he comes to think that ye ken naething aboot ploughin' and sawin', he'll think that ye ken naething about onything ! ' "

The following is rather an original commentary, by a layman, upon clerical incomes :—A relative of mine going to church with a Forfarshire farmer, one of the old school, asked him the amount of the minister's stipend. He said, " Od, it's gude ane—the maist part of £300 a-year." " Well," said my relative, " many of these Scotch ministers are but poorly off." " They've eneuch, sir ; they have eneuch ; if they'd mair, it would want a' their time to the spending o't."

Scotch gamekeepers had often much dry quiet humour —I was much amused by the answer of one of those under the following circumstances :—An Ayrshire gentleman, who was from the first a very bad shot, or rather no shot at all, when out on 1st of September, having failed, time after time, in bringing down a single bird, had at last pointed out to him by his attendant bag-carrier a large covey, thick and close on the stubbles. " Noo ! Mr. Jeems, let drive at them, just as they are ! " Mr. Jeems did let drive, as advised, but not a feather remained to testify the shot. All flew off, safe and sound—" Hech, sir (remarks his friend), but ye've made thae yins shift their quarters."

The two following anecdotes of rejoinders from Scottish gudewives, and for which I am indebted, as for many other kind communications, to the Rev. Mr. Blair of Dunblane, appear to me as good examples of the peculiar Scottish pithy phraseology which we now refer to, as any that I have met with.

An old lady who lived not far from Abbotsford, and

from whom the "Great Unknown" had derived many an ancient tale, was waited upon one day by the author of *Waverley*. On endeavouring to give the authorship the go-by, the old dame protested, "D'ye think, Sir, I dinna ken my ain groats in ither folk's kail?"

A conceited packman called at a farm-house in the west of Scotland, in order to dispose of some of his wares. The goodwife was startled by his southern accent, and his high talk about York, London, and other big places. "An' whaur come ye frae yersel?" was the question of the gudewife. "Ou! I am from the Border!" "The Border. Oh! I thocht that; for we aye think the selvidge is the wakest bid o' the wab!"

The following was a good specimen of ready Scotch humorous reply, by a master to his discontented workman, and in which he turned the tables upon him, in his reference to Scripture. In a town of one of the central counties a Mr. J—— carried on, about a century ago, a very extensive business in the linen manufacture. Although *strikes* were then unknown among the labouring classes, the spirit from which these take their rise has no doubt at all times existed. Among Mr. J——'s many workmen, one had given him constant annoyance for years, from his discontented and argumentative spirit. Insisting one day on getting something or other which his master thought most unreasonable, and refused to give in to, he at last submitted, with a bad grace, saying, "You're nae better than *Pharaoh*, sir, forcin' puir folk to mak' bricks without straw." "Well, Saunders," quietly rejoined his master, "if I'm nae better than Pharoah in one respect, I'll be better in another, for *I'll no hinder ye going to the wilderness whenever ye chuse.*"

Persons who are curious in Scottish stories of wit and humour, speak much of the sayings of a certain "Laird of Logan," who was a well-known character of the west of Scotland. This same laird of Logan was at

a meeting of the heritors of Cumnock, where a proposal was made to erect a new churchyard wall. He met the proposition with the dry remark, "I never big dykes till the *tenants* complain."

The laird sold a horse to an Englishman, saying, "You buy him as you see him; but he's an *honest* beast." The purchaser took him home. In a few days he stumbled and fell, to the damage of his own knees and his rider's head. On this the angry purchaser remonstrated with the laird, whose reply was, "Well, Sir, I told you he was an honest beast; many a time has he threatened to come down with me, and I kenned he would keep his word some day."

At the time of the threatened invasion, the laird had been taunted at a meeting at Ayr with want of a loyal spirit at Cumnock, as at that place no volunteer corps had been raised to meet the coming danger; Cumnock, it should be recollected, being on a high situation, and ten or twelve miles from the coast. "What sort of people are you, up at Cumnock?" said an Ayr gentleman; "you have not a single volunteer!" "Never you heed," says Logan, very quietly; "if the French land at Ayr, there will soon be plenty of volunteers up at Cumnock."

A pendant to the story of candid admission on the part of the minister, that the people might be *weary* after his sermon, has been given on the authority of the narrator, a Fife gentleman, ninety years of age when he told it. He had been to church at Elie, and listening to a young and perhaps bombastic preacher, who happened to be officiating for the Rev. Dr. Milligan, who was in church. After service, meeting the Doctor in the passage, he introduced the young clergyman, who, on being asked by the old man how he did, elevated his shirt collar, and complained of fatigue, and being very much "*tired*." "Tired, did ye say, my man," said the old satirist, who

was slightly deaf; "Lord, man! if you're *half* as tired as I am I pity ye."

I have been much pleased with an offering from Carluke, containing two very pithy anecdotes. Mr. Rankin very kindly writes,—"Your *Reminiscences* are most refreshing. I am very little of a story collector, but I have recorded some of an old schoolmaster, who was a story teller. As a sort of payment for the amusement I have derived from your book, I shall give one or two."

He sends the two following:—

"Shortly after Mr. Kay had been inducted schoolmaster of Carluke (1790) the bederal called at the school, verbally announcing, proclamation-ways, that Mrs. So-and-So's funeral would be on Fuirsday. 'At what hour?' asked the dominie. 'Ou, ony time atween ten and twa.' At two o'clock of the day fixed, Mr. K.— quite a stranger to the customs of the district—arrived at the place, and was astonished to find a crowd of men and lads, standing here and there, some smoking, and all *arglebargling*,[1] as if at the end of a fair. He was instantly, but mysteriously, approached, and touched on the arm by a red-faced, bare-headed man, who seemed to be in authority, and was beckoned to follow. On entering the barn, which was seated all round, he found numbers sitting, each with the head bent down, and each with his hat between his knees—all gravity and silence. Anon a voice was heard issuing from the far end, and a long prayer was uttered. They had worked at this—what was called '*a service*' during three previous hours, one party succeeding another, and many taking advantage of every service, which consisted of a prayer by way of grace, a glass of *white* wine, a glass of *red* wine, a glass of *rum*, and a prayer, by way of thanksgiving. After the long invocation, bread and wine passed round. Silence prevailed. Most partook of both *rounds* of wine, but

[1] Disputing or bandying words backwards and forwards.

when the rum came, many nodded refusal, and by-and-by the nodding seemed to be universal, and the trays passed on so much the more quickly. A sumphish weather-beaten man, with a large flat blue bonnet on his knee, who had nodded unwittingly, and was about to lose the last chance of a glass of rum, raised his head, saying, amid the deep silence, 'Od, I daursay I *wull* tak anither gless,' and in a sort of vengeful, yet apologetic tone, added, 'the auld jaud yince cheeted me wi' a cauve' (calf)."

"Dr. Scott, minister of Carluke (1770), was a fine, graceful, kindly man, always stepping about in his bag wig and cane in hand, with a kind or ready word to every one. He was officiating at a bridal in his parish, where there was a goodly company, had partaken of the good cheer, and waited till the young people were fairly warmed in the dance. A dissenting body had sprung up in the parish, which he tried to think was beneath him even to notice, when he could help it, yet never seemed to feel at all keenly when the dissenters were alluded to. One of the chief leaders of this body was at the bridal, and felt it to be his bounden duty to call upon the minister for his reasons for sanctioning by his presence so sinful an enjoyment. 'Weel, minister, what think ye o' this dancin'?' 'Why, John,' said the minister, blithely, 'I think it an excellent exercise for young people, and I dare say, so do you.' 'Ah, sir, I'm no sure about it; I see nae authority for't in the Scriptures.' 'Umph, indeed, John; you cannot forget David.' 'Ah, sir, Dauvid; gif they were a' to dance as Dauvid did, it would be a different thing a'thegither.' 'Hoot o fie, hoot o fie, John; would you have the young folk strip to the serk?'"

Reference has been made to the eccentric laird of Balnamoon, his wig, and his "speats o' drinking and praying." A story of this laird is recorded, which I do

think is well named, by a correspondent who communicates it, as a "quintessential phasis of dry Scotch humour," and the explanation of which would perhaps be thrown away upon any one who *needed* the explanation. The story is this:—The laird riding past a high steep bank, stopped opposite a hole in it, and said, "John, I saw a brock gang in there." "Did ye," said John; "wull ye haud my horse, sir?" "Certainly," said the laird, and away rushed John for a spade. After digging for half an hour, he came back, nigh speechless, to the laird, who had regarded him musingly. "I canna find him, sir," said John. "Deed," said the laird very coolly, "I wad ha' wondered if ye had, for it's ten years sin' I saw him gang in there."

Amongst many humorous colloquies between Balnamoon and his servant, the following must have been very racy and very original. The laird, accompanied by Hairy, after a dinner party, was riding, on his way home, through a ford, when he fell off into the water. "Whae's that fau'n, John," he inquired. "Deed," quoth John, "I witna an it be na your honour."

We have more than once had occasion to mention the late Rev. Walter Dunlop of the U.P. Church, Dumfries. To a kind clerical correspondent in that neighbourhood, I am indebted for the following. He was very much esteemed by his congregation as a faithful and affectionate minister. Few men equalled him for racy humour and originality. Many anecdotes are recorded of him in connection with his ministerial visitations. He was firmly persuaded that the workman was worthy of his meat, and he did not hesitate occasionally to intimate how agreeable certain "*presents*" would be to him and his better-half. He was widely respected by all denominations, and his death was greatly lamented.

One evening, while making his pastoral visitations among some of the country members of his flock, he

came to a farm-house where he was expected; and the mistress, thinking that he would be in need of refreshment, proposed that he should take his tea before engaging in *exercises*, and said she would soon have it ready. Mr. Dunlop replied, "I aye tak' my tea better when my wark's dune. I'll just be gaun on. Ye can hing the pan on, an' lea' the door ajar, an' I'll draw to a close in the prayer when I hear the haam fizzin'."

Another day, while engaged in the same duty of visitation, and while offering up prayer, a peculiar sound was heard to issue from his great-coat pocket, which was afterwards discovered to have proceeded from a half-choked duck, which he "had gotten in a *present*," and whose neck he had been squeezing all the time to prevent its crying.

On another occasion, after a hard day's labour, and while at a "denner-tea," as he called it, he kept incessantly praising the "haam," and stating that "Mrs. Dunlop at hame was as fond o' haam like that as he was," when the mistress kindly offered to send her the present of a ham. "It's unco kin' o' ye, unco kin', but I'll no pit ye to the trouble; I'll just tak' it hame on the horse afore me." When, on leaving, he mounted, and the ham was put into a sack, some difficulty was experienced in getting it to lie properly. His inventive genius soon cut the Gordian-knot. "I think, mistress, a cheese in the ither en' wad mak' a gran' balance." The hint was immediately acted on, and, like another John Gilpin, he moved away with his "balance true."

One day, returning from a short visit to the country, he met two ladies in Buccleuch Street, who stopped him to inquire after his welfare, and that of his wife. Lifting his hat politely, to the consternation of all three, out tumbled to his feet his handkerchief, followed by a large lump of potted-head, which he had received in a

"present," and was thus carrying home, but which, at the moment, he had entirely forgotten.

One Sunday, after sermon, just before pronouncing the blessing, he made the following intimation :—"My freens, I hae a baaptism at Locharbriggs the nicht, an' maybe some o' ye wad be sae kin' as to gie me a cast oot in a dandy-cart." On descending from the pulpit, several vehicles of the description were placed at his service.

He would not allow any of his congregation to sleep in church, if his eye caught them. One day he suddenly stopped in his sermon, and said, "I doot some o' ye hae taen ower mony whey porridge the day; sit up, or I'll name ye oot."

Some four-and-twenty years ago, when Mr. Dunlop lost his excellent and amiable wife, to whom it was well known he was strongly attached, Dr. Wightman, parish minister of Kirkmahoe, in the immediate neighbourhood of Dumfries, then upwards of seventy years of age and a bachelor, was invited to the funeral. On entering the house, he was surprised to observe that Mr. Dunlop, now a widower for a second time, did not appear to be so much affected as he would have expected, and indeed seemed wonderfully composed and cheerful. His peculiar humour could not be repressed even on this occasion, for he said, "Come awa', Dr. Wightman, come awa', it will be lang to the day when ye hae onything o' this kind to do."

It is more common in Scotland than in England to find national feeling breaking out in national humour upon great events connected with national *history*. The following is, perhaps, as good as any :—The Rev. Robert Scott, a Scotchman who forgets not Scotland in his southern vicarage, and whom I have named before as having sent me some good reminiscences, tells me that, at Inverary, some thirty years ago, he could not help overhearing the conversation of some Lowland cattle-

dealers in the public room in which he was. The subject of the bravery of our navy being started, one of the interlocutors expressed his surprise that Nelson should have issued his signal at Trafalgar in the terms, "*England expects*," etc. He was met with the answer (which seemed highly satisfactory to the rest), "Ay, Nelson only said '*expects*' of the English, he said naething of Scotland, for he *kent* the *Scotch* would do theirs."

I am assured the following manifestation of national feeling against the memory of a Scottish public character actually took place within a few years:—Williamson (the Duke of Buccleuch's huntsman) was one afternoon riding home from hunting through Haddington; and as he passed the old abbey, he saw an ancient woman looking through the iron grating in front of the burial-place of the Lauderdale family, holding by the bars, and grinning and dancing with rage. "Eh, gudewife," said Williamson, "what ails ye?" "It's the Duke o' Lauderdale," cried she. "Eh, if I could win at him, I wud rax the banes o' him."

To this class belongs the following complacent Scottish remark upon Bannockburn. A splenetic Englishman said to a Scottish countryman, something of a wag, that no man of taste would think of remaining any time in such a country as Scotland. To which the canny Scot replied, "Tastes differ; I'se tak' ye to a place, no far frae Stirling, whaur thretty thousand o' yer countrymen ha' been for five hunder years, an' they've nae thocht o' leaving yet."

In a similar spirit, an honest Scotch farmer, who had sent some sheep to compete at a great English agricultural cattle-show, consoled himself for the disappointment by insinuating that the judges could hardly act quite impartially by a Scottish competitor, complacently remarking, "It's aye been the same since Bannockburn."

A north-country drover had, however, a more *tangible* opportunity of gratifying his national animosity against the Southron, and of which he availed himself. Returning homewards, after a somewhat unsuccessful journey, and not in very good humour with the Englishers, when passing through Carlisle, he saw a notice stuck up, offering a reward of £50 for any one who would do a piece of service to the community, by officiating as executioner of the law on a noted criminal then under sentence of death. Seeing a chance to make up for his bad market, and comforted with the assurance that he was unknown there, he undertook the office, hanged the rogue, and got the fee. When moving off with the money, he was twitted as a mean beggarly Scot, doing for money what no *Englishman* would; he replied with a grin and quiet glee, "I'll hang ye a' at the price."

Some Scotchmen no doubt have a very complacent feeling regarding the superiority of their countrymen, and make no hesitation in proclaiming their opinion. I have always admired the quaint expression of such belief in a case which has recently been reported to me. A young Englishman had taken a Scottish shooting ground, and enjoyed his mountain sport so much as to imbibe a strong partiality for his northern residence and all its accompaniments. At a German watering-place he encountered, next year, an original character, a Scotchman of the old school, very national and somewhat bigoted in his nationality; he determined to pass himself off to him as a genuine Scottish native; and, accordingly, he talked of Scotland and haggis, and sheep's head and whisky; he boasted of Bannockburn, and admired Queen Mary; looked upon Scott and Burns as superior to all English writers; and staggered, although he did not convince, the old gentleman. On going away he took leave of his Scottish friend, and said, "Well, sir, next time we meet, I hope you will receive me as a real country-

man." "Weel," he said, "I'm jest thinkin', my lad, ye're ne Scotchman; but I'll tell ye what ye are; ye're jest an *impruived* Englishman."

We find in the conversation of old people frequent mention of parochial functionaries, now either become commonplace, like the rest of the world, or removed altogether, and shut up in poor-houses or mad-houses—I mean parish idiots—eccentric, or somewhat crazy, useless, idle creatures, who used to wander from house to house, and sometimes made very shrewd, sarcastic remarks upon what was going on in the parish. They used to take great liberty of speech regarding the conduct and disposition of those with whom they came in contact; and many old sayings which emanated from the parish idiots were traditionary in country localities. I have a kindly feeling towards these imperfectly intelligent, but often perfectly cunning beings; partly I believe from recollections of early associations in boyish days with some of those Davy Gellatleys. I have therefore preserved several anecdotes with which I have been favoured, where their odd sayings and indications of a degree of mental activity have been recorded. Parish idiots seem to have had a partiality for getting near the pulpit in church, and their presence there was accordingly sometimes annoying to the preacher and the congregation; as at Maybole, when Dr. Paul, now of St. Cuthbert's, was minister in 1823, the idiot John McLymont had been in the habit of standing so close to the pulpit door as to overlook the Bible and pulpit board. When required, however, by the clergyman to keep at a greater distance, and not *look in upon the minister*, he got intensely angry and violent. He threatened the minister,—"Sir, bæeby (maybe) I'll come further;" meaning to intimate that perhaps he would, if much provoked, come into the pulpit altogether. This, indeed, actually took place on another occasion, and the tenure of the ministerial position

was justified by an argument of a most amusing nature. The circumstance, I am assured, happened in a parish of the north. The clergyman, on coming into church, found the pulpit occupied by the parish idiot. The authorities had been unable to remove him without more violence than was seemly, and therefore waited for the minister to dispossess Tam of the place he had assumed. "Come down, sir, immediately;" was the peremptory and indignant call; and on Tam being unmoved, it was repeated with still greater energy. Tam, however, replied, looking down confidentially from his elevation, "Na, na, minister! juist ye come up wi' me. This is a perverse generation, and faith they need us baith." It is curious to mark the sort of glimmering of sense, and even of discriminating thought displayed by persons of this class; as an example, take a conversation held by this same idiot, John McLymont, with Dr. Paul, whom he met some time after. He seemed to have recovered his good-humour, as he stopped him, and said, "Sir, I would like to speer a question at ye on a subject that's troubling me." "Well, Johnie, what is the question?" To which he replied, "Sir, is it lawful at ony time to tell a lee?" The minister desired to know what Johnie himself thought upon the point. "Weel, sir," said he, "I'll no say but in every case it's wrong to tell a lee; but," added he, looking archly and giving a knowing wink, "I think there are *waur lees than ithers*." "How, Johnie?" and then he instantly replied with all the simplicity of a fool, "to *keep down a din, for instance*. I'll no say but a man does wrang in telling a lee to keep down a din, but I'm sure he does not do half sae muckle wrang as a man who tells a lee to kick up a deevilment o' a din." This opened a question not likely to occur to such a mind. Mr. Asher, minister of Inveraven in Morayshire, narrated to Dr. Paul a curious example of want of intelligence combined with a power of cunning

to redress a fancied wrong, shown by a poor natural of the parish, who had been seized with a violent inflammatory attack, and was in great danger. The medical attendant saw it necessary to bleed him, but he resisted, and would not submit to it. At last the case became so hopeless that they were obliged to use force, and, holding his hands and feet, the doctor opened a vein and drew blood, upon which the poor creature, struggling violently, bawled out, "O doctor, doctor! you'll kill me! you'll kill me! and depend upon it, the first thing I'll do when I get to the other world will be to *report you to the Board of Supervision there, and get you dismissed.*"

A most extraordinary sensation was once produced on a congregation by Rab Hamilton, a well-remembered idiot of the west country, on the occasion of his attendance at the parish kirk of "Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a toun surpasses." Miss Kirkwood, Bothwell, relates the story from the recollection of her aunt, who was present. Rab had put his head between some iron rails, the first intimation of which to the congregation was a stentorian voice crying out, "Murder! my head'll hae to be cutit aff! Holy minister! congregation! O my head maun be cutit aff. It's a judgment for leaving my godlie Mr. Peebles at the Newton." After he had been extricated and quieted, when asked why he put his head there? he said, "It was jeest to look on[1] wi' *anither woman.*"

The pathetic complaint of one of this class, residing at a farm-house, has often been narrated, and forms a good illustration of idiot life and feelings. He was living in the greatest comfort, and every want provided. But, like the rest of mankind, he had his own trials, and his own cause for anxiety and annoyance. In this poor fellow's case it was the *great turkey-cock* at the farm, of whom he stood so terribly in awe, that he was afraid to come within a great distance of his enemy.

[1] Read from the same book.

Some of his friends coming to visit him, reminded him how comfortable he was, and how grateful he ought to be for the great care taken of him; he admitted the truth of the remark generally, but still, like the rest of the world, he had his unknown grief which sorely beset his path in life. There was a secret grievance which embittered his lot; and to his friend he thus opened his heart:—"Ae, ae, but oh, I'm sare hadden doun wi' the bubbly jock."[1]

I have received two anecdotes illustrative both of the occasional acuteness of mind, and of the sensitiveness of feeling occasionally indicated by persons thus situated. A well-known idiot, Jamie Fraser, belonging to the parish of Lunan, in Forfarshire, quite surprised people sometimes by his replies. The congregation of his parish church had for some time distressed the minister by their habit of sleeping in church. He had often endeavoured to impress them with a sense of the impropriety of such conduct, and one day when Jamie was sitting in the front gallery wide awake, when many were slumbering round him, the clergyman endeavoured to awaken the attention of his hearers by stating the fact, saying, "You see even Jamie Fraser, the idiot, does not fall asleep, as so many of you are doing." Jamie, not liking, perhaps, to be thus designated, coolly replied, "An' I hadna been an idiot, I wad ha' been sleepin' too." Another of these imbeciles, belonging to Peebles, had been sitting at church for some time listening attentively to a strong representation from the pulpit of the guilt of deceit and falsehood in Christian characters. He was observed to turn red, and grow very uneasy, until at last, as if wincing under the supposed attack upon himself personally, he roared out, "Indeed, minister, there's mair leears in Peebles than me." As examples of idiots possessing much of the dry humour of their more sane countrymen, and of their facility to utter

[1] Sorely kept under by the turkey-cock.

sly and ready-witted sayings, I have received the two following from Mr. W. Chambers :—Daft Jock Gray, the supposed original of David Gellatley, was one day assailed by the minister of a south-country parish, on the subject of his idleness. "John," said the minister rather pompously, "you are a very idle fellow; you might surely herd a few cows." "Me hird!" replied Jock, "I dinna ken corn frae gerse."

In the *Memorials of the Montgomeries, Earls of Eglington*, vol. i. p. 134, occurs an anecdote of an idiot illustrative of the peculiar acuteness and quaint humour which occasionally mark the sayings of the class. There was a certain "Daft Will Speir," who was a privileged haunter of Eglinton Castle and Grounds. He was discovered by the Earl one day taking a near cut, and crossing a fence in the demesne. The Earl called out, "Come back, sir, that's not the road." "Do ye ken," said Will, "whaur I'm gaun?" "No," replied his lordship. "Weel, hoo the deil do ye ken whether this be the road or no?"

The following anecdote is told regarding the late Lord Dundrennan :—A half silly basket-woman passing down his avenue at Compstone one day, he met her, and said, "My good woman, there's no road this way." "Na, sir," she said. "I think ye're wrang there; I think it's a most beautifu' road."

These poor creatures have invariably a great delight in attending funerals. In many country places, hardly a funeral took place without the attendance of the parochial idiot. It seemed almost a necessary association; and such attendance seemed to constitute the great delight of those creatures. I have myself witnessed again and again the sort of funeral scene portrayed by Sir Walter Scott, who no doubt took his description from what was common in his day. "The funeral pomp set forth—saulies with their batons and gumphions of tarnished

white crape. Six starved horses, themselves the very emblems of mortality, well cloaked and plumed, lugging along the hearse with its dismal emblazonry, crept in slow pace towards the place of interment, preceded by Jamie Duff, an idiot, who, with weepers and cravat made of white paper, *attended on every funeral*, and followed by six mourning coaches filled with the company."—*Guy Mannering.*

The following anecdote, supplied by Mr. Blair, is an amusing illustration, both of the funeral propensity, and of the working of a defective brain, in a half-witted carle, who used to range the county of Galloway, armed with a huge pike-staff, and who one day met a funeral procession a few miles from Wigtown. A long train of carriages, and farmers riding on horseback, suggested the propriety of his bestriding his staff, and following after the funeral. The procession marched at a brisk pace, and on reaching the kirkyard style, as each rider dismounted, "Daft Jock" descended from his wooden steed, besmeared with mire and perspiration, exclaiming, "Hech, sirs, had it no been for the fashion o' the thing, I micht as well hae been on my ain feet."

The withdrawal of these characters from public view, and the loss of importance which they once enjoyed in Scottish society, seem to me inexplicable. Have they ceased to exist, or are they removed from our sight to different scenes? The fool was, in early times, a very important personage in most Scottish households of any distinction. Indeed, this had been so common as to be a public nuisance.

It seems that persons *assumed* the character, for we find a Scottish Act of Parliament, dated 19th January, 1449, with this title;—"Act for the way-putting of *Fenyent* Fules," etc. (Thomson's *Acts of Parliament of Scotland*, vol. i.); and it enacts very stringent measures against such persons. They seem to have formed a link

between the helpless idiot and the boisterous madman, sharing the eccentricity of the latter and the stupidity of the former, generally adding, however, a good deal of the sharp-wittedness of the *knave*. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, this appears to have been still an appendage to some families. I have before me a little publication with the title, "The Life and Death of Jamie Fleeman, the Laird of Udny's Fool. Tenth edition. Aberdeen, 1810. With portrait. Also twenty-sixth edition, of 1829." I should suppose this account of a family fool was a fair representation of a good specimen of the class. He was evidently of defective intellect, but at times showed the odd humour and quick conclusion which so often mark the disordered brain. I can only now give two examples taken from his history :—Having found a horse shoe on the road, he met Mr. Craigie, the minister of St. Fergus, and showed it to him, asking, in pretended ignorance, what it was. "Why, Jamie," said Mr. Craigie good-humouredly, "anybody that was not a fool would know that it is a horse shoe." "Ah!" said Jamie, with affected simplicity, "what it is to be wise —to ken it's no a meer's shoe!"

On another occasion, when all the country side were hastening to the Perth races, Jamie had cut across the fields and reached a bridge near the town, and sat down upon the parapet. He commenced munching away at a large portion of a leg of mutton which he had somehow become possessed of, and of which he was amazingly proud. The laird came riding past, and seeing Jamie sitting on the bridge, accosted him :—"Ay, Fleeman, are ye here already?" "Ou ay," quoth Fleeman, with an air of assumed dignity and archness not easy to describe, while his eye glanced significantly towards the mutton, "Ou ay, ye ken a body when he *has onything*."

Of witty retorts by half-witted creatures of this class, I do not know of one more pointed than what is recorded

of such a character who used to hang about the residence of a late Lord Fife. It would appear that some parts of his lordship's estates were barren, and in a very unproductive condition. Under the improved system of agriculture and of draining, great preparations had been made for securing a good crop in a certain field, where Lord Fife, his factor, and others interested in the subject, were collected together. There was much discussion, and some difference of opinion as to the crop with which the field had best be sown. The idiot retainer, who had been listening unnoticed to all that was said, at last cried out, "Saw't wi' factors, ma lord; they are sure to thrive everywhere."

"Daft Will Speir" (mentioned page 209) was passing the minister's glebe, where haymaking was in progress. The minister asked Will if he thought the weather would keep up, as it looked rather like rain. "Weel," said Will, "I canna be very sure, but I'll be passin' this way the nicht, an' I'll ca' in and tell ye." "Well, Will," said the Earl one day to Will Speir, seeing the latter finishing his dinner, "have you had a good dinner to-day?" (Will had been grumbling some time before.) "Ou, vera gude," answered Will; "but gin onybody asks if I got a dram after't, what will I say?" This poor creature had a high sense of duty. It appears he had been given the charge of the coal stores at the Earl of Eglinton's. Having on one occasion been reprimanded for allowing the supplies to run out before further supplies were ordered, he was ever afterwards most careful to fulfil his duty. In course of time poor Will became "sick unto death," and the minister came to see him. Thinking him in really a good frame of mind, the minister asked him, in presence of the laird and others, if there were not *one great* thought which was ever to him the highest consolation in his hour of trouble? "Ou ay," gasped the sufferer, "Lord be thankit, a' the bunkers are fu'."

There was an idiot who lived long in Lauder, and seems to have had a great resemblance to the jester of old times. He was a staunch supporter of the Established Church. One day, some one gave him a bad shilling. On Sunday he went to the Seceders' Meeting-house, and when the ladle was taken round he put in his bad shilling and took out elevenpence halfpenny. Afterwards he went in high glee to the late Lord Lauderdale, calling out, "I've cheated the Seceders the day, my lord; I've cheated the Seceders."

Jemmy had long harboured a dislike to the steward on the property, which he paid off in the following manner: Lord Lauderdale and Sir Anthony used to take him out shooting; and one day Lord Maitland (he was then) on having to cross the Leader, said, "Now, Jemmy, you shall carry me through the water," which Jemmy duly did. Bowmaker, Lord Lauderdale's steward, who was shooting with them, said, "Now, Jemmy, you must carry *me* over." "Vera weel," said Jemmy. He took the steward on his back, and when he had carefully carried him half way across the river, he dropped him quietly into the water.

I have recorded an anecdote received from Mr. W. Chambers, of a half-idiot, Rab Hamilton, whose name was familiar to most persons who knew Ayr in former days. He certainly was a natural; but the following anecdote of him from a kind correspondent at Ayr sanctions the opinion that he must have occasionally said such clever things as made some think him more rogue than fool. Dr. Auld often showed him kindness, but being once addressed by him when in a hurry and out of humour, he said, "Get away, Rab; I have nothing for you to-day." "Whaw, whew," cried Rab in a half howl, half whining tone, "I dinna want onything the day, Mister Auld; I wanted to tell you an awsome dream I hae had. I dreamt I was deed." "Weel, what then?" said Dr. Auld.

"Ou, I was carried far, far, and up, up, up, till I cam to heeven's yett, where I chappit, and chappit, and chappit, till at last an angel keekit out, and said, 'Wha are ye?' 'Am puir Rab Hamilton.' 'Whaur are ye frae?' 'Frae the wicked toun o' Ayr.' 'I dinna ken ony sic place,' said the angel. 'Oh, but I'm joost frae there.' Weel, the angel sends for the Apostle Peter, and Peter comes wi' his key and opens the yett, and says to me, 'Honest man, do you come frae the auld toun o' Ayr?' 'Deed do I,' says I. 'Weel,' says Peter, 'I ken the place, but naebody's cam frae the town o' Ayr, no since the year'" so and so—mentioning the year when Dr. Auld was inducted into the parish. Dr. Auld laughed, and told him to go about his business.

A daft individual used to frequent the same district, about whom a variety of opinions were entertained,—some people thinking him not so foolish as he sometimes seemed. On one occasion, a person wishing to test whether he knew the value of money, held out a sixpence and a penny, and offered him his choice. "I'll tak the wee ane," he says, giving as his modest reason, "I'se no be greedy." At another time, a miller, laughing at him for his witlessness, he said, "Some things I ken, and some I dinna ken." On being asked what he knew, he said, "I ken a miller has aye a gey fat sou." "An' what d'ye no ken?" said the miller. "Ou," he returned, "I dinna ken at wha's expense she's fed at."

A very amusing collision of one of these penurious lairds already referred to, a certain Mr. Gordon of Rothy, with a half-daft beggar wanderer of the name of Jock Muilton, has been recorded. The laird was very shabby, as usual, and, meeting Jock, began to banter him on the subject of his dress:—"Ye're very grand, Jock. That's fine claes ye hae gotten; whaur did ye get that coat?" Jock told him who had given him his coat, and then, looking slily at the laird, he inquired, as

with great simplicity, "and where did ye get *yours*, laird?"

Another example of shrewd and ready humour in one of that class is the following. In this case the idiot was musical, and earned a few stray pence by playing Scottish airs on a flute. He resided at Stirling, and used to hang about the door of the inn to watch the arrival and departure of travellers. A lady who used to give him something occasionally, was just starting, and said to Jamie that she had only a fourpenny piece, and that he must be content with that, for she could not stay to get more. Jamie was not satisfied; and, as the lady drave out, expressed his feelings by playing with all his might, "O weerie o' the *toom pouch*."[1]

In the *present* Volunteer movement we record with pleasure an anecdote concerning the *old* Volunteers, in the beginning of the century, and which we think not unworthy of being recorded. It was related by the father of my correspondent, who held a commission in the first Regiment, Glasgow Volunteers. This regiment had scarcely been raised when its services were required in a somewhat trying emergency—the mutiny of a regiment of Highland Fencibles, then in the barracks, which had taken offence at being ordered abroad, or for some other cause. The Highlanders were posted on one side of George Square and the Volunteers on the other; and the lines were so extended that the conversation of two Highlanders was overheard, running to the following effect:—"Donald," said one, "I dinna think thae lads would stan' us." "I dinna ken, Angus," was the reply; "they're shentlemen, an' they wudna rin." The idea is strikingly Celtic, but admirably hits the truth.

I have two anecdotes of two peers, who might be said to come under the description of half-witted. In

[1] Empty pocket.

their case, the same sort of dry Scottish humour came out under the cloak of mental disease. The first is of a Scottish nobleman of the last century who had been a soldier the greater part of his life, but was obliged to come home on account of aberration of mind, superinduced by hereditary propensity. Desirous of putting him under due restraint, and, at the same time, of engaging his mind in his favourite pursuit, his friends procured a Sergeant Briggs to be his companion and overseer; and to render the sergeant acceptable as a companion, they introduced him to the old earl as *Colonel* Briggs. Being asked how he liked the colonel, the earl answered, "Very well; he is a sensible man, and a good soldier, but he *smells damnably of the halbert.*"

The second anecdote is of a *mad* Scottish nobleman, and I believe is a traditionary one. In Scotland, some hundred years ago, madhouses did not exist, or were on a very limited scale; and there was often great difficulty in procuring accommodation for patients who required special treatment and seclusion from the world. The nobleman in question had been consigned to the Canongate prison, and his position there was far from comfortable. An old friend called to see him, and asked how it had happened that he was placed in so unpleasant a situation. His reply was, "Sir, it was more the kind interest and patronage of my friends than my own merits that have placed me here." "But have you not remonstrated or complained?" asked his visitor. "I told them," said his lordship, "that they were a pack of infernal villains." "Did you?" said his friend; "that was bold language; and what did they say to that?" "Oh," said the peer, "I took care not to tell them till they were fairly out of the place, and weel up the Canongate."

In Peebles there was a crazy being of this kind called "Daft Yedie." On one occasion he saw a gentleman, a stranger in the town, who had a club foot. Yedie

contemplated this phenomenon with some interest, and addressing the gentleman, said compassionately, "It's a great pity—it spoils the boot." There is a story of one of those half-witted creatures of a different character from the humorous ones already recorded; I think it is exceedingly affecting, and with it I will conclude my collection. The story is traditionary in a country district, and I am not aware of its being ever printed. A poor boy, of this class, who had evidently manifested a tendency towards religious and devotional feelings, asked permission from the clergyman to attend the Lord's Table and partake of the Holy Communion with the other members of the congregation (whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian I do not know). The clergyman demurred for some time, under the impression of his mind being incapable of a right and due understanding of the sacred ordinance. But observing the extreme earnestness of the poor boy, at last gave consent, and he was allowed to come. He was much affected, and all the way home was heard to exclaim, "Oh! I hae seen the pretty man." This referred to his seeing the Lord Jesus, whom he had approached in the sacrament. He kept repeating the words, and went with them on his lips to rest for the night. Not appearing at the usual hour for breakfast, when they went to his bedside they found him dead! The excitement had been too much—mind and body had given way—and the half-idiot of earth awoke to the glories and the bliss of his Redeemer's presence.

Analogous with the language of the *defective* intellect is the language of the imperfectly formed intellect, and I have often thought there was something very touching and very fresh in the expression of feelings and notions by children. I have given an example before, but the following is, to my taste, a charming specimen:—A little boy had lived for some time with a very penurious uncle, who took good care that the child's health should not be

injured by over-feeding. The uncle was one day walking out, the child at his side, when a friend accosted him, accompanied by a greyhound. While the elders were talking, the little fellow, never having seen a dog of so slim and slight a texture, clasped the creature round the neck with the impassioned cry, "Oh, doggie, doggie, and div ye live wi' your uncle tae, that ye are so thin!"

In connection with funerals, I am indebted to the kindness of Lord Kinloch for a characteristic anecdote of cautious Scottish character in the west country. It was the old fashion, still practised in some districts, to carry the coffin to the grave on long poles or "spokes," as they were commonly termed. There were usually two bearers abreast on each side. On a certain occasion, one of the two said to his companion, "I'm awfu' tired wi' carryin'." "Do you *carry*?" was the interrogatory in reply. "Yes; what do you do?" "Oh," said the other, "I aye *lean*." His friend's fatigue was at once accounted for.

I am strongly tempted to give the following account of a parish functionary in the words of a kind correspondent from Kilmarnock, although communicated in the following very flattering terms:—"In common with every Scottish man worthy of the name, I have been delighted with your book, have the ambition to add a pebble to the cairn, and accordingly send you a *bellman story*; it has, at least, the merit of being unprinted and unedited."

The incumbent of Craigie parish, in this district of Ayrshire, had asked a Mr. Wood, tutor in the Cairnhill family, to officiate for him on a particular Sunday. Mr. Wood, however, between the time of being asked and the appointed day, got intimation of the dangerous illness of his father; in the hurry of setting out to see him, he forgot to arrange for the pulpit being filled. The bellman of Craigie parish, by name Matthew Sinning, and at this

time about eighty years of age, was a very little "crined"[1] old man, and always wore a broad Scottish blue bonnet, with a red "bob" on the top. The parish is a small rural one, so that Matthew knew every inhabitant in it, and had seen the most of them grow up. On this particular day, after the congregation had waited for some time, Matthew was seen to walk very slowly up the middle of the church, with the large Bible and psalm-book under his arm, to mount the pulpit stair; and after taking his bonnet off, and smoothing down his forehead with his "loof," thus addressed the audience :—

"My freens, there was ane Wuds tae ha'e preached here the day, but he has nayther comed himsel', nor had the ceevility tae sen' us the scart o' a pen. Ye'll bide here for ten meenonts, and gin naebody comes forrit in that time, ye can gang awa' hame. Some say his feyther's dead, as for that I kenna."

The following is another illustration of the character of the old Scottish betheral. One of those worthies, who was parochial grave-digger, had been missing for two days or so, and his reverence had in vain sent to discover him to most likely places. He bethought, at last, to make inquiry at a "public" at some distance from the village, and on entering the door met his man in the trance, quite fou, staggering out, supporting himself with a hand on each wa'. To the minister's sharp rebuke and rising wrath for his indecent and shameful behaviour, John, a wag in his way, and emboldened by liquor, made answer, "Deed, sir, sin' I ca'd at the manse, I ha'e buried an auld wife, and I've just drucken her, hough and horn." Such was his candid admission of the manner in which he had disposed of the church fees paid for the interment.

An encounter of wits between a laird and an elder. A certain laird in Fife, well known for his parsimonious habits, whilst his substance largely increased did not

[1] Shrivelled.

increase his liberality, and his weekly contribution to the church collection never exceeded the sum of one penny. One day, however, by mistake he dropped into the plate at the door a five-shilling-piece, but discovering his error before he was seated in his pew, hurried back, and was about to replace the dollar by his customary penny, when the elder in attendance cried out, "Stop, laird, ye may put *in* what ye like, but ye maun tak' naething *out*!" The laird, finding his explanations went for nothing, at last said, "Aweel, I suppose I'll get credit for it in heaven." "Na, na, laird," said the elder, "ye'll only get credit for the *penny*."

The following is not a bad specimen of sly *piper* wit :—

The Rev. Mr. Johnston of Monquhitter, a very grandiloquent pulpit orator in his day, accosting a travelling piper, well known in the district, with the question, "Well, John, how does the wind pay?" received from John, with a low bow, the answer, "Your Reverence has the advantage of me."

Of *table* stories there is an anecdote which may be placed along with those of the two worthy farmers, page 179, and which has occurred to my recollection as a Deeside story. My aunt, Mrs. Forbes, receiving a farmer at Banchory Lodge, offered him a draught of ale, which was accepted, and a large glass of it quickly drunk off. My aunt, observing no froth or head, said she was afraid it was not a good bottle. "Oh, vera good, mem; it's just some strong o' the apple" (a common country expression for beer which is rather tart or sharp). The fact turned out that a bottle of *vinegar* had been decanted by mistake.

And further, upon the subject of tenants at table. It was a most pungent remark of an honest farmer to the servant who put down beside him a dessert spoon, when he had been helped to pudding, "Tak it awa, mi man, mi mou's as big for puddin' as it is for kail."

I have received from Rev. William Blair, A.M., U.P. minister at Dunblane, many kind communications. I have made a selection, which I now group together, and they have this character in common, that they are all anecdotes of ministers :—

Rev. Walter Dunlop of Dumfries was accompanying a funeral one day, when he met a man driving a flock of geese. The wayward disposition of the bipeds at the moment was too much for the driver's temper, and he indignantly cried out "Deevil choke them." Mr. Dunlop walked a little farther on, and passed a farmstead, where a servant was driving out a number of swine, and banning them with "Deevil tak' them." Upon which, Mr. Dunlop stepped up to him, and said, "Ay, ay, my man, your gentleman 'll be wi' ye i' the noo ; he's just back the road there a bit, choking some geese till a man."

Shortly after the Disruption, Dr. Cook of St. Andrews was introduced to Mr. Dunlop, upon which occasion Mr. Dunlop said, "Weel, sir, ye've been lang Cook, Cooking them, but ye've dished them at last."

Mr. Clark of Dalreoch, whose head was vastly disproportioned to his body, met Mr. Dunlop one day. "Weel, Mr. Clark, that's a great head o' yours." "Indeed it is, Mr. Dunlop ; I could contain yours inside of my own." "Just sae," echoed Mr. Dunlop, "I was e'en thinkin' it was geyan *toom*."

Mr. Dunlop happened one day to be present in a Church Court of a neighbouring presbytery. A Rev. Dr. was asked to pray, and declined. On the meeting adjourning, Mr. Dunlop stepped up to the Doctor, and asked how he did. The Doctor never having been introduced, did not reply. Mr. Dunlop withdrew, and said to his friend, "Eh ! but is'na he a queer man, that Doctor, he'll neither speak to God nor man."

The Rev. John Brown of Whitburn was riding out one day on an old pony, when he was accosted by a rude

youth. "I say, Mr. Broon, what gars your horse's tail wag that way." "Oo, jest what gars your tongue wag; it's fashed wi' a *wakeness*."

About sixty years ago there were two ministers in Sanquhar of the name of Thomson, one of whom was father of the late Dr. Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh, the other was father of Dr. Thomson of Balfron. The domestic in the family of the latter was rather obtrusive with her secret devotions, sometimes kneeling on the stairs at night, and talking loud enough to be heard. On a communion season she was praying devoutly for her minister, "Remember Mr. Tamson, no him at the Green but oor ain Mr. Tamson."

Rev. Mr. Leslie of Morayshire combined the duties of justice of peace with those of parochial clergyman. One day he was taken into confidence by a culprit who had been caught in the act of smuggling, and was threatened with a heavy fine. The culprit was a staunch Seceder, and owned a small farm. Mr. Leslie said to him, "The king will come in the cadger's road some day. Ye wadna come to the parish kirk though it were to save your life, wad ye? Come noo, an' I'se mak ye a' richt!" Next Sabbath the seceding smuggler appeared in the parish kirk, and as the paupers were receiving parochial allowance, Mr. Leslie slipt a shilling into the smuggler's hand. When the J. P. Court was held, Mr. Leslie was present, when a fine was proposed to be exacted from the smuggler. "Fine!" said Mr. Leslie, "he's mair need o' something to get duds to his back. He's ane o' my *poor roll*; I gie'd him a shilling just last Sabbath."

A worthy old Seceder used to ride from Gargunnock to Bucklyvie every Sabbath to attend the Burgher kirk. One day as he rode past the parish kirk of Kippen, the elder at the plate accosted him, "I'm sure, John, it's no like the thing to see you ridin' in sic a doon-pour o' rain sae far by to thae Seceders. Ye ken the mercifu' man is

mercifu' to his beast. Could ye no step in by." "Weel," said John, "I wadna care sae muckle about stablin' my beast inside, but it's anither thing mysel' gain' in."

The Rev. Dr. George Lawson of Selkirk acted for many years as theological tutor to the Secession Church. One day on entering the Divinity Hall he overheard a student remark that the professor's wig was uncombed. That same student, on that very day, had occasion to preach a sermon before the doctor, for which he received a bit of severe criticism, the sting of which was in its tail, "You said my wig wasna kaimed this mornin,' my lad, but I think I've redd your head to you."

The Rev. John Heugh of Stirling was one day admonishing one of his people of the sin of intemperance. "Man, John, you should never drink except when you're dry." "Weel, sir," quoth John, "that's what I'm aye doin', for I am never slockin'd."

The Rev. Mr. M—— of Bathgate came up to a street pavier one day, and addressed him, "Eh! John, what's this you're at?" "Oh! I'm mending the ways of Bathgate!" "Ah, John, I've long been tryin' to mend the ways o' Bathgate, an' they're no weel yet." "Weel, Mr. M., if you had tried my plan, and come doon to your *knees*, ye wad maybe hae come mair speed!"

There once lived in Cupar a merchant whose store contained supplies of every character and description, so that he was commonly known by the soubriquet of Robbie A'Thing. One day a minister who was well known for making a free use of his notes in the pulpit, called at the store asking for a rope and pin to tether a young calf in the glebe. Robbie at once informed him that he could not furnish such articles to him. But the minister being somewhat importunate, said, "Oh! I thought you were named Robbie A'Thing from the fact of your keeping all kinds of goods." "Weel a weel," said Robbie, "I keep a'thing in my shop but

calf's tether-pins and paper sermons for ministers to read."

It was a somewhat whimsical advice, supported by whimsical argument, which used to be given by John Brown of Haddington to his students, on going abroad among people, " to sup well at the kail, for if they were good they were worth the supping, and if not they might be sure there was not much worth coming after them."

A good many families in and around Dunblane rejoice in the patronymic of Dochart. This name, which sounds somewhat Irish, is derived from Loch Dochart in Argyleshire. The M'Gregors having been proscribed, were subjected to severe penalties, and a group of the clan having been hunted by their superiors, swam the stream which issues from Loch Dochart, and in gratitude to the river they afterwards assumed the family name of Dochart. A young lad of this name, on being sent to Glasgow College, presented a letter from his minister to Reverend Dr. Heugh of Glasgow. He gave his name as Dochart, and the name in the letter was M'Gregor : " Oh," said the Doctor, " I fear there is some mistake about your identity, the names don't agree." " Weel, sir, that's the way they spell the name in our country."

The relative whom I have mentioned as supplying so many Scottish anecdotes had many stories of a parochial functionary whose eccentricities have, in a great measure, given way before the assimilating spirit of the times. I mean the old Scottish beadle, or betheral, as he used to be called. Some classes of men are found to have that nameless but distinguishing characteristic of figure and aspect which marks out particular occupations and professions of mankind. This was so much the case in the betheral class, that an old lady observing a well-known judge and advocate walking together in the street, remarked to a friend as they passed by, " Dear me, Lucy, wha are they twa *beddle-looking* bodies ! " They were

often great originals and, I suspect, must have been in past times somewhat given to convivial habits, from a remark I recollect of the late Baron Clerk Rattray, viz., that in his younger days he had hardly ever known a perfectly sober betheral. However this may have been, they were, as a class, remarkable for quaint humour, and for being shrewd observers of what was going on. I have heard of an occasion where the betheral made his wit furnish an apology for his want of sobriety. He had been sent round the parish by the minister to deliver notices at all the houses of the catechising which was to precede the preparation for receiving the communion. On his return it was quite evident that he had partaken too largely of refreshment since he had been on his expedition. The minister reproached him for this improper conduct. The betheral pleaded the pressing *hospitality* of the parishioners. The clergyman did not admit the plea, and added, "Now, John, I go through the parish, and you don't see me return fou as you have done." "Ay, minister," rejoined the betheral, with much complacency, "but then aiblins ye're no sae popular i' the parish as me." My relative used to tell of one of these officials receiving, with much ceremony, a brother betheral from a neighbouring parish, who had come with the minister thereof about to preach for some special occasion. After service, the betheral of the stranger clergyman felt proud of the performance of the appointed duty, and said, in a triumphant tone, to his friend, "I think our minister did weel; ay, he gars the stour flee out o' the cushion." To which the other rejoined, with a calm feeling of superiority, "Stour oot o' the cushion! hout, our minister, sin' he cam wi' us, has dung the guts oot o' twa Bibles." Another description I have heard of an energetic preacher more forcible than delicate—"Eh, our minister had a great power o' watter, for he grat, and spat, and swat like mischeef." An obliging anonymous correspondent

has sent me a story of a functionary of this class whose pride was centred not so much in the performance of the minister as of the precentor. He states that he remembers an old beadle of the church which was called "Haddo's Hole," and sometimes the "Little Kirk," in Edinburgh, whose son occasionally officiated as precentor. He was not very well qualified for the duty, but the father had a high opinion of his son's vocal powers. In those days there was always service in the church on the Tuesday evenings; and when the father was asked on such occasions, "Who's to preach to-night?" his self-complacent reply used to be, "I divna ken wha's till preach, but my son's for till precent." This class of functionaries were very free in their remarks upon the preaching of strangers, who used occasionally to occupy the pulpit of their church —the city betherals speaking sometimes in a most condescending manner of clergy from the provincial parishes. As, for example, a betheral of one of the large churches in Glasgow, criticising the sermon of a minister from the country, who had been preaching in the city church, characterised it as "Gude coorse country wark." A betheral of one of the churches of S. Giles', Edinburgh, used to call on the family of Mr. Robert Stevenson, engineer, who was one of the elders. On one occasion they asked him what had been the text on such a night, when none of the family had been present. The man of office, confused at the question, and unwilling to show anything like ignorance, poured forth, "Weel, ye see, the text last day, was just entirely, sirs—yes—the text, sirs—what was it again—ou ay, just entirely, ye see it was 'What profiteth a man if he lose the world, and gain his own soul.'" Most of such stories are usually of an old standing. A more recent one has been told me of a betheral in a royal burgh much decayed from former importance, and governed by a feeble municipality of old men who continued in office, and in fact constituted

rather the shadow than the substance of a corporation. A clergyman from a distance having come to officiate in the parish church, the betheral, knowing the terms on which it was usual for the minister officiating to pray for the efficiency of the local magistracy, quietly cautioned the clergyman before service that, in regard to the town council there, it would be quite out of place for him to pray that they should be a "terror to evil doers," because, as he said, the "poor auld bodies could be nae terror to onybody." The beadle of a country parish is usually called the minister's man, and to one of these who had gone through a long course of such parish official life, a gentleman one day remarked—"John, ye hae been sae lang about the minister's hand that I dare say ye could preach a sermon yersell now." To which John modestly replied, "Oh, na, sir, I couldna preach a sermon, but maybe, I could draw an inference." "Well, John," said the gentleman, humouring the quiet vanity of the beadle, "what inference could ye draw frae this text, 'a wild ass snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure?'" (Jeremiah ii. 24.) "Weel, sir, I wad draw this inference, he wad snuff a lang time afore he would fatten upon't." I had an anecdote from a friend of a reply from a betheral to the minister *in* church, which was quaint and amusing from the shrewd self-importance it indicated in his own acuteness. The clergyman had been annoyed during the course of his sermon by the restlessness and occasional whining of a dog, which at last began to bark outright. He looked out for the beadle, and directed him very peremptorily, "John, carry that dog out." John looked up to the pulpit, and with a very knowing expression said, "Na, na, sir; I'se just mak him gae out on his ain four legs." I have another story of canine misbehaviour in church. A dog was present during the service, and in the sermon the worthy minister was in the habit of speaking very loud, and, in fact, when he got warmed with his

subject, of shouting almost to the top of his voice. The dog who, in the early part, had been very quiet, became quite excited, as is not uncommon with some dogs when hearing a noise, and from whinging and whining, as the speaker's voice rose loud and strong, at last began to bark and howl. The minister, naturally much annoyed at the interruption, called upon the betheral to put out the dog, who at once expressed his readiness to obey the order, but could not resist the temptation to look up to the pulpit, and to say very significantly, "Ay, ay, sir; but indeed it was yoursell began it." There is a dog story connected with Reminiscences of Glasgow (see *Chambers' Journal*, March 1855), which is full of meaning. The bowls of rum punch which so remarkably characterised the Glasgow dinners of last century and the early part of the present, it is to be feared made some of the congregation given to somnolency on the Sundays following. The members of the town council often adopted Saturday for such meetings; accordingly, the Rev. Mr. Thom, an excellent clergyman, took occasion to mark this propensity with some acerbity. A dog had been very troublesome, and disturbed the congregation for some time, when the minister at last gave orders to the beadle, "Take out that dog; he'd wauken a Glasgow magistrate."

The parochial grave-diggers had sometimes a very familiar professional style of dealing with the solemn subjects connected with their office—thus I have heard of a grave-digger pointing out a large human bone to a lady who was looking at his work, of digging a grave, and asking her—"D'ye ken wha's bane that is, mem? —that's Jenny Fraser's hench-bane;" adding with a serious aspect—"a weel-baned family thae Frasers!"

It would be impossible in these reminiscences to omit the well-known and often-repeated anecdote connected with an eminent divine of our own country, whose works take a high place in our theological literature. The

story to which I allude was rendered popular throughout the kingdom some years ago, by the inimitable mode in which it was told, or rather acted, by the late Charles Matthews. But Matthews was wrong in the person of whom he related the humorous address. I have assurance of the parties from a friend, whose father, a distinguished clergyman in the Scottish Church at the time, had accurate knowledge of the whole circumstances. The late celebrated Dr. Macknight, a learned and profound scholar and commentator, was nevertheless, as a preacher, to a great degree, heavy, unrelieved by fancy or imagination; an able writer, but a dull speaker. His colleague, Dr. Henry, well known as the author of a history of England, was, on the other hand, a man of great humour, and could not resist a joke when the temptation came upon him. On one occasion when coming to church, Dr. Macknight had been caught in a shower of rain, and entered the vestry soaked with wet. Every means were used to relieve him from his discomfort; but as the time drew on for divine service he became much distressed, and ejaculated over and over, "Oh, I wush that I was dry; do you think I'm dry; do you think I'm dry eneuch noo?" His jocose colleague could resist no longer, but, patting him on the shoulder, comforted him with the sly assurance, "Bide a wee, Doctor, and ye'se be dry eneuch when ye get into the pu'pit." Another quaint remark of the facetious Doctor to his more formal colleague has been preserved by friends of the family. Dr. Henry, who, with all his pleasantry and abilities, had himself as little popularity in the pulpit as his coadjutor, had been remarking to Dr. Macknight what a blessing it was that they two were colleagues in one charge, and continued dwelling on the subject so long, that Dr. Macknight, not quite pleased at the frequent reiteration of the remark, said that it certainly was a great pleasure to himself, but he did not see what great benefit it might be

to the world. "Ah," said Dr. Henry, "an it hadna been for that, there wad hae been *twa* toom[1] kirks this day." I am indebted to a gentleman, himself also a distinguished member of the Scottish Church, for an authentic anecdote of this learned divine, and which occurred whilst Dr. Macknight was the minister of Maybole. One of his parishioners, a well-known humorous blacksmith of the parish, who, no doubt, thought that the Doctor's learned books were rather a waste of time and labour for a country pastor, was asked if his minister was at home. The Doctor was then busy bringing out his laborious and valuable work, his *Harmony of the Four Gospels*. "Na, he's gane to Edinburgh on a verra useless job." On being asked what this useless work might be which engaged his pastor's time and attention, he answered, "He's gane to mak' four men agree wha ne'er cast out." The good-humoured and candid answer of a learned and rather long-winded preacher of the old school, always appeared to me quite charming. The good man was far from being a popular preacher, and yet he could not reduce his discourses below the hour and a half. On being asked, as a gentle hint, of their possibly needless length, if he did not feel *tired* after preaching so long, he replied, "Na, na, I'm no tired;" adding, however, with much *naïveté*, "But, Lord, hoo tired the fowk whiles are."

The late good, kind-hearted Dr. David Dickson was fond of telling a story of a Scottish termagant of the days before kirk-session discipline had passed away. A couple were brought before the court, and Janet, the wife, was charged with violent and undutiful conduct, and with wounding her husband, by throwing a three-legged stool at his head. The minister rebuked her conduct, and pointed out its grievous character, by explaining that just as Christ was head of His Church,

[1] Empty.

so the husband was head of the wife; and therefore, in assaulting *him*, she had, in fact, injured her own body. "Weel," she replied, "it's come to a fine pass gin a wife canna kame her ain head." "Aye, but Janet," rejoined the minister, "a three-legged stool is a thief-like bane kame to scart yer ain head wi!"

Our object in bringing up and recording anecdotes of this kind is to elucidate the sort of humour we refer to, and to show it as a humour of *past* times. A modern clergyman could hardly adopt the tone and manner of the older class of ministers—men not less useful and beloved, on account of their odd Scottish humour, which indeed suited their time. Could a clergyman, for instance, now come off from the trying position in which we have heard of a northern minister being placed, and by the same way through which he extricated himself with much good nature and quiet sarcasm? A young man sitting opposite to him in the front of the gallery, had been up late on the previous night, and had stuffed the cards with which he had been occupied into his coat pocket. Forgetting the circumstance, he pulled out his handkerchief, and the cards all flew about. The minister simply looked at him, and remarked, "Eh, man, your psalm buik has been ill bund."

Many anecdotes of pithy and facetious replies are recorded of a minister of the south, usually distinguished as "Our Watty Dunlop." On one occasion two irreverent young fellows determined, as they said, to "taigle"[1] the minister. Coming up to him in the High Street of Dumfries, they accosted him with much solemnity. "Maister Dunlop, dae ye hear the news?" "What news?" "Oh, the deil's deed." "Is he," said Mr. Dunlop, "then I maun pray for twa faitherless bairns." On another occasion Maister Dunlop met, with characteristic humour, an attempt to play off a trick against

[1] Confound.

him. It was known that he was to dine with a minister whose house was close to the church, so that his return back must be through the churchyard. Accordingly some idle and mischievous youths waited for him in the dark night, and one of them came up to him, dressed as a ghost, in hopes of putting him in a fright. Watty's cool accost speedily upset the plan. "Weel, Maister Ghaist, is this a general rising, or are ye juist taking a daunder frae your grave by yersell?" I have received from a correspondent another specimen of Watty's acute rejoinders. Some years ago the celebrated Edward Irving had been lecturing at Dumfries, and a man who passed as a wag in that locality had been to hear him. He met Watty Dunlop the following day, who said, "Weel, Willie, man, an' what do ye think of Mr. Irving?" "Oh," said Willie contemptuously, "the man's crack't." Dunlop patted him on the shoulder, with the quiet remark, "Willie, ye'll aften see a light peeping through a crack!"

An admirable story of a quiet pulpit rebuke is traditionary in Fife, and is told of Mr. Shirra, a seceding minister of Kirkcaldy, a man still well remembered by some of the older generation for many excellent and some eccentric qualities. A young officer of a volunteer corps on duty in the place, very proud of his fresh uniform, had come to Mr. Shirra's church, and walked about as if looking for a seat, but in fact to show off his dress, which he saw was attracting attention from some of the less grave members of the congregation. He came to his place, however, rather quickly, on Mr. Shirra quietly remonstrating, "O man, will ye sit doun, and we'll see your new breeks when the kirk's dune." This same Mr. Shirra was well known from his quaint, and, as it were, parenthetical comments which he introduced in his reading of Scripture; as, for example, on reading from the 116th Psalm, "I said in my haste all men are liars,"

he quietly observed, "Indeed, Dauvid, an' ye had been i' this parish ye might hae said it at your leesure."

There was something even still more pungent in the incidental remark of a good man, in the course of his sermon, who had in a country place taken to preaching out of doors in the summer afternoons. He used to collect the people as they were taking air by the side of a stream outside the village. On one occasion he had unfortunately taken his place on a bank, and fixed himself on an *ants' nest*. The active habits of those little creatures soon made the position of the intruder upon their domain very uncomfortable; and afraid that his audience might observe something of this discomfort in his manner, apologised by the remark—"Brethren, though I hope I have the word of God in my mouth, I think the deil himself has gotten into my breeks."

There was often no doubt a sharp conflict of wits when some of these humorist ministers came into collision with members of their flocks who were *also* humorists. Of this nature is the following anecdote, which I am assured is genuine:—A minister in the north was taking to task one of his hearers who was a frequent defaulter, and was reproaching him as an habitual absentee from public worship. The accused vindicated himself on the plea of a dislike to long sermons. "'Deed, man," said his reverend monitor, a little nettled at the insinuation thrown out against himself, "if ye dinna mend, ye may land yersell where ye'll no be troubled wi' mony sermons either lang or short." "Weel, aiblins sae," retorted John, "but it may na be for want o' ministers." An *answer* to Mr. Shirra himself, strongly illustrative of Scottish ready and really clever wit, and which I am assured is quite authentic, must, I think, have struck the fancy of that excellent humorist himself. When Mr. Shirra was parish minister of St. Ninian's, one of the members of the church was John Henderson or Anderson—a very

decent douce shoemaker—and who left the church and joined the Independents, who had a meeting in Stirling. Sometime afterwards, when Mr. Shirra met John on the road, he said, "And so, John, I understand you have become an independent?" "Deed, sir," replied John, "that's true." "Oh, John," said the minister, "I'm sure you ken that a rowin' (rolling) stane gathers nae fog" (moss). "Aye," said John, "that's true too; but can ye tell me what guid the fog does to the stane?" Mr. Shirra himself afterwards became a Baptist. The wit, however, was all in favour of the minister in the following:—

Dr. Gilchrist, formerly of the East Parish of Greenock, and who died minister of the Canongate, Edinburgh, received an intimation of one of his hearers, who had been exceedingly irregular in his attendance, that he had taken seats in an Episcopal chapel. One day soon after, he met his former parishioner, who told him that he had "changed his religion." "Indeed," said the Doctor quietly, "how's that? I ne'er heard ye had ony." It was this same Dr. Gilchrist who gave the well-known quiet but forcible rebuke to a young minister whom he considered rather conceited and fond of putting forward his own doings, and who was to officiate in the Doctor's church. He explained to him the mode in which he usually conducted the service, and stated that he always finished the prayer before the sermon with the Lord's Prayer. The young minister demurred at this, and asked if he "might not introduce any other short prayer?" "Ou aye," was the Doctor's quiet reply, "gif ye can gie us ony thing *better*."

At Banchory, on Deeside, some of the criticisms and remarks on sermons were very quaint and characteristic. My cousin had asked the Ley's Grieve what he thought of a young man's preaching, who had been more successful in appropriating the words than the ideas of Dr. Chalmers.

He drily answered, " Ou, Sir Thomas, just a floorish o' the surface." But the same hearer bore this unequivocal testimony to another preacher whom he really admired. He was asked if he did not think the sermon long, " Na, I shuld nae hae thocht it lang an' I'd been sitting on thorns."

I think the following is about as good a sample of what we call Scotch " pawky " as any I know : A countryman had lost his wife and a favourite cow on the same day. His friends consoled him for the loss of the wife ; and being highly respectable, several hints and offers were made towards getting another for him. " Ou, ay," he at length replied, " you're a keen aneuch to get me anither wife, but no yin o' ye offers to gie me anither coo."

The following anecdotes, collected from different contributors, are fair samples of the quaint and original character of Scottish ways and expressions now becoming more and more matters of reminiscence :—A poor man came to his minister for the purpose of intimating his intention of being married. As he expressed, however, some doubts on the subject, and seemed to hesitate, the minister asked him if there were any doubts about his being accepted. No, that was not the difficulty ; but he expressed a fear that it might not be altogether suitable, and he asked whether, if he were once married, he could not (in case of unsuitability and unhappiness) get *un*-married ? The clergyman assured him that it was impossible ; if he married it must be for better and worse ; that he could not go back upon the step. So thus instructed he went away. After a time he returned, and said he had made up his mind to try the experiment, and he came and was married. Ere long he came back very disconsolate, and declared it would not do at all ; that he was quite miserable, and begged to be unmarried. The minister assured him that was out of the question, and urged him to put away the notion of anything so absurd. The

man insisted that the marriage could not hold good, for the wife was waur than the deevil. The minister demurred, saying that was quite impossible. "Na," said the poor man, "the Bible tells ye that if ye resist the deil he flees frae ye, but if ye resist her she flees at ye."

A faithful minister of the gospel being one day engaged in visiting some members of his flock, came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of contention within. After waiting a little he opened the door, and walked in, saying with an authoritative voice, "I should like to know who is the head of this house." "Weel, sir," said the husband and father, "if ye sit doon a wee, we'll maybe be able to tell ye, for we're just trying to settle that point."

A minister in the north returning thanks in his prayers, one Sabbath, for the excellent harvest, began as usual, "O Lord, we thank thee," etc., and went on to mention its abundance, and its safe ingathering; but feeling anxious to be quite candid and scrupulously truthful, added, "all except a few fields between this and Stonehaven, not worth mentioning."

A Scotch preacher being sent to officiate one Sunday at a country parish, was accommodated at night in the manse, in a very diminutive closet, instead of the usual best bed-room appropriated to strangers.

"Is this the bed-room?" he said, starting back in amazement.

"'Deed aye sir, this is the prophets' chalmer."

"It maun be for the *minor* prophets, then," was the quiet reply.

Elders of the kirk, no doubt, frequently partook of the original and humorous character of ministers and others, their contemporaries; and amusing scenes must have passed, and good Scotch sayings been said, where they were concerned. Dr. Chalmers used to repeat one of these sayings of an elder, with great delight. The

Doctor associated with the anecdote the name of Lady Glenorchy and the church which she endowed; but I am assured that the person was Lady Elizabeth Cunninghame, sister of Archibald eleventh Earl of Eglinton, and wife of Sir John Cunninghame, Bart., of Caprington, near Kilmarnock. It seems her ladyship had, for some reason, taken offence at the proceedings of the Caprington parochial authorities, and a result of which was that she ceased putting her usual liberal offering into the plate at the door. This had gone on for some time, till one of the elders, of a less forbearing character than the others, took his turn at the plate. Lady Elizabeth, as usual, passed by without a contribution, but made a formal courtesy to the elder as she passed, and sailed majestically up the aisle. The good man was determined not to let her pass so easily. He quickly followed her up the passage, and urged the remonstrance, "My lady, gie us less o' your mainers and mair o' your siller."[1]

Of an eccentric and eloquent professor and divine of a northern Scottish university, there are numerous and

[1] Although the name of Lady Glenorchy has been erroneously associated with the above story, and with a demeanour which was quite foreign to her general character, still it is very suitable, I think, to retain my former reference to the history of this noble lady *since* her death as forming a striking illustration of the uncertainty of all earthly concerns, and as supplying a Scottish reminiscence belonging to the last seventy years. Wilhelmina Viscountess Glenorchy, during her lifetime, built and endowed a church for two ministers, who were provided with very handsome incomes. She died 17th July 1786, and was buried on the 24th July, aged 44. Her interment took place, by her own direction, in the church she had founded, immediately in front of the pulpit; and she fixed upon that spot as a place of security and safety, where her mortal remains might rest in peace till the morning of the resurrection. But alas for the uncertainty of all earthly plans and projects for the future!—the iron road came on its reckless course, and swept the church away. The site was required for the North British Railway, which passed directly over the spot where Lady Glenorchy had been buried. Her remains were accordingly disinterred 24th December 1844; and the trustees of the church, not having yet erected a new one, deposited the body of their foundress in the vaults beneath St. John's Episcopal Church, and after resting there for fifteen years, were, in 1859, removed to the building which is now Lady Glenorchy's Church.

extraordinary traditionary anecdotes. I have received an account of some of these anecdotes from the kind communication of an eminent Scottish clergyman, who was himself, in early days, his frequent hearer. The stories told of the strange observations and allusions which he introduced into his pulpit discourses, almost surpass belief. For many reasons, they are not suitable to the nature of this publication, still less could they be tolerated in any pulpit administration now, although familiar to his contemporaries. The remarkable circumstance, however, connected with these eccentricities was, that he introduced them with the utmost gravity, and oftentimes after he had delivered them, pursued his subject with great earnestness and eloquence, as if he had said nothing uncommon. One saying of the Professor, however, *out* of the pulpit, is too good to be omitted, and may be recorded without violation of propriety. He happened to meet at the house of a lawyer, whom he considered rather a man of *sharp* practice, and for whom he had no great favour, two of his own parishioners. The lawyer jocularly and ungraciously put the question: "Doctor, these are members of your flock; may I ask, do you look upon them as white sheep or as black sheep?" "I don't know," answered the Professor drily, "whether they are black or white sheep, but I know that if they are long here they are pretty sure to be fleeced."

It was a pungent answer given by a Free Kirk member who had deserted his colours and returned to the old faith. A short time after the Disruption, the Free Church minister chanced to meet him who had then left him and returned to the Established Church. The minister bluntly accosted him—"Ay, man, John, an' ye've left us; what micht be your reason for that? Did ye think it wasna a guid road we was gaun?" "Ou, I darsay it was a guid eneuch road and a braw road; but O, man, the tolls were unco high."

The following story I received from a member of the Penicuik family :—Dr. Ritchie, who died minister of St. Andrew's, Edinburgh, was, when a young man, tutor to Sir G. Clerk and his brothers. Whilst with them, the clergyman of the parish became unable, from infirmity and illness, to do his duty, and Mr. Ritchie was appointed interim assistant. He was an active young man, and during his residence in the country had become fond of fishing and was a good shot. When the grouse-shooting came round, his pupils happened to be laid up with a fever, so Mr. Ritchie had all the shooting to himself. One day he walked over the moor so far that he became quite weary and footsore. On returning home he went into a cottage, where the good woman received him kindly, gave him water for his feet, and refreshment. In the course of conversation, he told her he was acting as assistant minister of the parish, and he explained how far he had travelled in pursuit of game, how weary he was, and how completely knocked up he was. "Weel, sir, I dinna doubt ye maun be sair travelled and tired wi' your walk." And then she added, with sly reference to his profession, "Deed, sir, I'm thinking ye micht hae travelled frae Genesis to Revelations and no been sae footsore."

I cannot do better in regard to the three following anecdotes of the late Professor Gillespie of St. Andrews, than give them to my readers in the words with which Dr. Lindsay Alexander kindly communicated them to me.

"In the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1860, in an article on Student Life in Scotland, there is an anecdote of the late Professor Gillespie of St. Andrews, which is told in such a way as to miss the point and humour of the story. The correct version, as I have heard it from the Professor himself, is this: having employed the village carpenter to put a frame round a dial at the manse of Cults, where he was minister, he received from the man a

bill to the following effect—'To fencing the *deil*, 5s. 6d.' 'When I paid him,' said the Professor, 'I could not help saying, John, this is rather more than I counted on; but I haven't a word to say. I get somewhere about two hundred a year for fencing the *deil*, and I'm afraid I don't do it half so effectually as you've done."

"Whilst I am writing, another of the many stories of the learned and facetious Professor rises in my mind. There was a worthy old woman at Cults whose place in church was what is commonly called the Lateran; a kind of small gallery at the top of the pulpit steps. She was a most regular attender, but as regularly feel asleep during sermon, of which fault the preacher had sometimes audible intimation. It was observed, however, that though Janet always slept during her own pastor's discourse, she could be attentive enough when she pleased, and especially was she alert when some young preacher occupied the pulpit. A little piqued, perhaps, at this, Mr. Gillespie said to her one day, 'Janet, I think you hardly behave very respectfully to your own minister in one respect.' 'Me, sir,' exclaimed Janet, 'I wad like to see ony man, no to say woman, by yoursel say that o' me! what can you mean, sir?' 'Weel, Janet, ye ken when I preach, you're almost always fast asleep before I've well given out my text; but when any of these young men from St. Andrews preach for me, I see you never sleep a wink. Now, that's what I call no using me as you should do.' 'Hoot, sir,' was the reply, 'is that a'? I'll soon tell you the reason o' that. When you preach, we a' ken the word o' God's safe in your hands; but when thae young birkies tak' it in haun, my certie, but it tak's us a' to look after them.'[1]

"I am tempted to subjoin another. In the Humanity

[1] I have abundant evidence to prove that a similar answer to that which Dr. Alexander records to have been made to Mr. Gillespie has been given on similar occasions by others.—*E. B. R.*

Class, one day, a youth who was rather fond of shewing off his powers of language, translated Horace, Ode iii., 3, 61, 62, somewhat thus—"The fortunes of Troy renascent under sorrowful omen shall be repeated with sad catastrophe.' 'Catastrophe,' cried the Professor. 'Catastrophe, Mr. ——, that's Greek. Give us it in plain English, if you please?' Thus suddenly pulled down from his high horse, the student effected his retreat with a rather lame and impotent version. 'Now,' said the Professor, his little sharp eyes twinkling with fun, 'that brings to my recollection what once happened to a friend of mine, a minister in the country. Being a scholarly man, he was sometimes betrayed into the use of words in the pulpit which the people were not likely to understand; but being very conscientious, he never detected himself in this, without pausing to give the meaning of the word he had used, and sometimes his extempore explanations of very fine words were a little like what we have just had from Mr.——, rather too flat and commonplace. On one occasion, he allowed this very word 'catastrophe' to drop from him, on which he immediately added, 'that, you know, my friends, means the *end* of a thing.' Next day, as he was riding through his parish, some mischievous youth succeeded in fastening a bunch of furze to his horse's tail—a trick which, had the animal been skittish, might have exposed the worthy pastor's horsemanship to too severe a trial, but which happily had no effect whatever on the sober minded and respectable quadruped which he bestrode. On, therefore, he quietly jogged, utterly unconscious of the addition that had been made to his horse's caudal region, until, as he was passing some cottages, he was arrested by the shrill voice of an old woman, exclaiming, 'Heh, sir! Heh, sir! there's a whunbuss at your horse's catawstrophe!'"

I have brought in the following anecdote, exactly as it

appeared in the *Scotsman* of October 4, 1859, because it introduces the name of Rev. John Skinner, of Langside, author of "Tullochgorum,[1] The Ewie wi' the Crooked Horn," and other excellent Scottish songs. Skinner was also a learned divine, and wrote theological works in Latin and English. He was a correspondent of Burns, and his name was "familiar as household words" to the old people of Aberdeenshire and Forfar.

"The late Rev. John Skinner, long Episcopal clergyman of Forfar, was first appointed to a charge in Montrose, from whence he was removed to Banff, and ultimately to Forfar. After he had left Montrose, it reached his ears that an ill-natured insinuation was circulating in Montrose that he had been induced to leave this town by the temptation of a better income and of fat pork, which, it would appear, was plentiful in the locality of his new incumbency. Indignant at such an aspersion, he wrote a letter, directed to his maligners, vindicating himself sharply from it, which he shewed to his grandfather, John Skinner of Langside, for his approval. The old gentleman objected to it as too lengthy, and proposed the following pithy substitute:—

'Had Skinner been of carnal mind,
As strangely ye suppose,
Or had he even been fond of swine,
He'd ne'er have left Montrose.'"

But there is an anecdote of John Skinner which should endear his memory to every generous and loving heart. On one occasion he was passing a small dissenting place of worship at the time when the congregation were engaged in singing; on passing the door—old-fashioned Scottish Episcopalian as he was—he reverently took off his hat. His companion said to him, "What! do you feel so much sympathy with this Anti-Burgher congregation?"

[1] Hence frequently spoken of under the sobriquet of "Tullochgorum."

"No," said Mr. Skinner, "but I respect and love any of my fellow-Christians who are engaged in singing to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." Well done, old Tullochgorum! thy name shall be loved and honoured by every true liberal-minded Scotsman.

On the subject of epigrams, I have received a clever impromptu of a judge's lady, produced in reply to one made by the witty Henry Erskine. At a dinner party at Lord Armadale's, when a bottle of claret was called for, port was brought in by mistake. A second time claret was sent for, and a second time the same mistake occurred. Henry Erskine addressed the host in an impromptu, which was meant as a parody on the well-known Scottish song, "My jo, Janet"—

> "Kind sir, it's for your courtesie
> When I come here to dine, sir,
> For the love ye bear to me,
> Gie me the claret wine, sir."

To which Mrs. Honeyman retorted—

> "Drink the port, the claret's dear,
> Erskine, Erskine;
> Ye'll get fou on't, never fear,
> My jo, Erskine."

Some of my younger readers may not be familiar with the epigram of John Home, author of the tragedy of *Douglas*. The lines were great favourites with Sir Walter Scott, who delighted in repeating them. Home was very partial to claret, and could not bear port. He was exceedingly indignant when the government laid a tax upon claret, having previously long connived at its introduction into Scotland under very mitigated duties. He embodied his anger in the following epigram—

> "Firm and erect the Caledonian stood,
> Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
> 'Let him drink port,' an English statesman cried—
> He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

There is a curious story traditionary in some families regarding a Scottish nobleman, celebrated in Scottish

history, which, I am assured, is true, and farther, that it has never yet appeared in print. The story is, therefore, a Scottish reminiscence, and, as such, deserves a place here. The Earl of Lauderdale was so ill as to cause great alarm to his friends, and perplexity to his physicians. One distressing symptom was a total absence of sleep, and the medical men declared their opinion, that without sleep being induced, he could not recover. His son, a queer eccentric-looking boy, who was considered not entirely right in his mind, but somewhat "*daft*," and who accordingly had had little attention paid to his education, was sitting under the table, and cried out, "Sen' for that preaching man frae Livingstone, for he aye sleeps in the kirk." One of the doctors thought this hint worth attending to. The experiment of "getting a minister till him" succeeded, and sleep coming on, he recovered. The Earl, out of gratitude for this benefit, took more notice of his son, paid attention to his education, and that boy became the Duke of Lauderdale, afterwards so famous or infamous in his country's history.

The following very amusing anecdote, although it belongs more properly to the division or peculiarities of Scottish dialect and phraseology, I give in the words of a correspondent who received it from the parties with whom it originated. About twenty years ago, he was paying a visit to a cousin, married to a Liverpool merchant of some standing. The husband had lately had a visit from his aged father, who formerly followed the occupation of farming in Stirlingshire, and who had probably never been out of Scotland before in his life. The son, finding his father rather *de trop* in his office, one day persuaded him to cross the ferry over the Mersey, and inspect the harvesting, then in full operation, on the Cheshire side. On landing he approached a young woman reaping with the sickle in a field of oats, when the following dialogue ensued :—

FARMER.—Lassie, are yer aits muckle bookit th' year ?

REAPER.—Sir ?

FARMER.—I was speiring gif yer aits are muckle bookit th' year.

REAPER (in amazement).—I really don't know what you are saying, sir.

FARMER (in equal astonishment).—Gude—safe—us, —do ye no understaan gude plain English !—are—yer —aits—muckle—bookit ?

Reaper decamps to her nearest companion, saying that was a madman, while he shouted in great wrath, "They were naething else than a set o' ignorant pock-puddings."

The following anecdote is highly illustrative of the thoroughly attached old family serving-man. A correspondent sends it as told to him by an old schoolfellow of Sir Walter Scott's at Fraser and Adam's class, High School.

One of the lairds of Abercairnie proposed to *go out*, on the occasion of one of the risings for the Stuarts, in the '15 or '45—but this was not with the will of his old serving-man, who, when Abercairnie was pulling on his boots, preparing to go, overturned a kettle of boiling water upon his legs, so as to disable him from joining his friends—saying, "Tak that—Let them fecht wha like, stay ye at hame and be Laird o' Abercairnie."

A story illustrative of a union of polite courtesy, with rough and violent ebullition of temper common in the old Scottish character, is well known in the Lothian family. William Henry, fourth Marquis of Lothian, had for his guest at dinner an old countess to whom he wished to shew particular respect and attention.[1] After a very

[1] This Marquis of Lothian was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cumberland at the battle of Culloden, and sullied his character as a soldier and a nobleman by the cruelties which he exercised on the vanquished.

complimentary reception, he put on his white gloves to hand her downstairs, led her to the upper end of the table, bowed and retired to his own place. This I am assured was the usual custom with the chief lady guest by persons who themselves remember it. After all were seated, the Marquis addressed the lady, "Madam, may I have the honour and happiness of helping your ladyship to some fish?" But he got no answer, for the poor woman was deaf as a post, and did not hear him; after a pause, but still in the most courteous accents, "Madam, have I your ladyship's permission to send you some fish?" Then a little quicker, "Is your ladyship inclined to take fish?" Very quick, and rather peremptory, "Madam, do you choice fish?" At last the thunder burst, to everybody's consternation, with a loud thump on the table and stamp on the floor: "Con—found ye, will ye have any fish?" I am afraid the exclamation might have been even of a more pungent character.

A correspondent has kindly enabled me to add a reminiscence and anecdote of a type of Scottish character now nearly extinct,—I mean the old Scottish *military* officer of the wars of Holland, and the Low Countries. I give them in his own words: "My father, the late Rev. Dr. Bethune, minister of Dornoch, was on friendly terms with a fine old soldier, the late Colonel Alexander Sutherland, of Calmaly and Braegrudy, in Sutherlandshire, who was Lieutenant-Colonel of the '*Local Militia*,' and who used occasionally, in his word of command, to break out with a Gaelic phrase to the men, much to the amusement of bystanders. He called his charger, a high boned not overfed animal, Cadăver—a play upon accents, for he was a good classical scholar, and fond of quoting the Latin poets. But he had no relish nor respect for the '*modern languages*,' particularly for that of our neighbours, whom he looked upon as '*hereditary*' enemies! My father and the Colonel were both politicians, as well as

scholars. Reading a newspaper article in his presence one day, my father stopped short, handing the paper to him, and said, 'Colonel, here is a *French* quotation, which you can translate better than I can.' 'No, sir!' said the Colonel, 'I never learnt the language of the scoundrels!!!' The Colonel was known as 'Col. Sandy Sutherland,' and the men always called him *Colonel Sandy*. He was a splendid specimen of the hale veteran, with a stentorian voice, and the last queue I remember to have seen."

A correspondent kindly sends me from Aberdeenshire a humorous story, very much of the same sort as that of Colonel Erskine's servant, who considerately suggested to his master that "maybe an aith might relieve him."[1] My correspondent heard the story from the late Bishop Skinner.

It was among the experiences of his father, Bishop *John* Skinner, while making some pastoral visits in the neighbourhood of the town (Aberdeen), the Bishop took occasion to step into the cottage of two humble parishioners, a man and his wife, who cultivated a little croft. No one was within; but as the door was only on the latch, the Bishop knew that the worthy couple could not be far distant. He therefore stepped in the direction of the outhouses, and found them both in the barn winnowing corn, in the primitive way, with "riddles," betwixt two open doors. On the Bishop making his appearance, the honest man ceased his winnowing operations, and in the gladness of his heart stepped briskly forward to welcome his pastor; but in his haste he trod upon the rim of the riddle, which rebounded with great force against one of his shins. The accident made him suddenly pull up; and, instead of completing the reception, he stood vigorously rubbing the injured limb; and, not daring in such a venerable presence to give vent to the customary strong ejaculations, kept twisting his face into all sorts

[1] Sir H. Moncreiff's *Life of Dr. J. Erskine.*

of grimaces. As was natural, the Bishop went forward, uttering the usual formulas of condolence and sympathy, the patient, meanwhile, continuing his rubbings and his silent but expressive contortions. At last Janet came to the rescue; and, clapping the Bishop coaxingly on the back, said, "Noo, Bishop, jist gang ye yir waas in to the hoose, an' we'll follow fan he's had time to curse a fyllie, an' I'se warran' he'll seen be weel eneuch!"

The following might have been added as examples of the dry humorous manner in which our countrymen and countrywomen sometimes treat matters with which they have to deal, even when serious ones:—

An itinerant vendor of wood in Aberdeen having been asked how his wife was, replied, "O she's fine, I hae ta'en her to Banchory;" and on it being innocently remarked that the change of air would do her good, he looked up, and, with a half smile, said, "Hoot, she's i' the kirkyard."

The well-known aversion of the Scotch to hearing *read* sermons has often led to amusing occurrences. One indulged pastor in a country district was permitted so far to transgress the rule, as to be allowed notes, which never in number exceeded three, and which of course were—"1st, 2nd, thirdly and lastly." One Sabbath afternoon, having exhausted both firstly and secondly, he came to the termination of his discourse; but, unfortunately the manuscript was awanting. In vain efforts to seek the missing paper, he repeated "thirdly and lastly" *ad nauseam* to his hearers. At last one, cooler than the others, rose, and nodding to the minister, observed, "Deed, sir, if I'm no mista'en, I saw 'thirdly and lastly' fa' ower the poopit stairs."

A man who had had four wives, and who meditated a fifth time entering the marriage state, was conversing with his friend on the subject, who was rather disposed to banter him a little upon his past matrimonial schemes,

as having made a good deal of *money* by his wives,—"Na, na," he replied, "they cam' t' me wi' auld kists,[1] and I sent them hame i' new anes."

The two following are from a correspondent who heard them told by the late Dr. Barclay, the anatomist, well known for his own dry Scottish humour.

A country laird, at his death, left his property in equal shares to his two sons, who continued to live very amicably together for many years. At length one said to the other, "Tam, we're getting auld now, you'll tak' a wife, and when I dee you'll get my share o' the grund." "Na, John, you're the youngest and maist active, you'll tak' a wife, and when I dee you'll get my share." "Od," says John, "Tam, that's just the way wi' you whan there's ony *fash or trouble.* The deevil a thing you'll do at a'."

A country clergyman, who was not on the most friendly terms with one of his heritors who resided in Stirling, and who had annoyed the minister by delay in paying the teinds, found it necessary to make the laird understand that his proportion of stipend must be paid so soon as it became due. The payment came next term punctual to the time. When the messenger was introduced to the minister, he asked who he was, remarking, that he thought he had seen him before. "I am the hangman of Stirling, sir." "Oh, just so, take a seat till I write you a receipt." It was evident that the laird had chosen this medium of communication with the minister as an affront, and to shew his spite. The minister, however, turned the tables upon him, sending back an acknowledgment for the payment in these terms :—"Received from Mr. ——, by the hands of the hangman of Stirling, *his doer,*[2] the sum of," etc. etc.

[1] Chests.

[2] In Scotland it is usual to term the law-agent or man of business of any party, his "doer."

The following story of pulpit criticism by a beadle, used to be told, I am assured, by the late Rev. Dr. Andrew Thomson :—

A clergyman in the country had a stranger preaching for him one day, and meeting his beadle, he said to him, "Well, Saunders, how did you like the sermon to-day?" "I watna', sir, it was rather ower plain and simple for me. I like thae sermons best that jumbles the joodgement and confoonds the sense; Od, sir, I never saw ane that could come up to yoursel' at that."

The epithet "canny" has frequently been applied to our countrymen, not in a severe or invidious spirit, but as indicating a due regard to personal interest and safety. In the larger edition of *Jamieson* (see edition of 1840) I find there are no fewer than eighteen meanings given of this word. The following extract from a provincial paper, which has been sent me, will furnish a good illustration. It is headed, the "PROPERTY QUALIFICATION," and goes on—"Give a Chartist a large estate, and a copious supply of ready money, and you make a Conservative of him. He can then see the other side of the moon, which he could never see before. Once, a determined Radical in Scotland, named Davy Armstrong, left his native village; and many years afterwards, an old fellow-grumbler met him, and commenced the old song. Davy shook his head. His friend was astonished, and soon perceived that Davy was no longer a grumbler, but a rank Tory. Wondering at the change, he was desirous of knowing the reason. Davie quietly and laconically replied—"I've a coo (cow) noo.'"

But even still more "canny" was the eye to the main chance in an Aberdonian fellow-countryman, communicated in the following pleasant terms from a Nairn correspondent :—"I have just been reading your delightful 'Reminiscences,' which has brought to my recollection a story I used to hear my father tell. It was thus :—

A countryman in a remote part of Aberdeenshire having got a newly-coined sovereign, in the days when such a thing was seldom seen in his part of the country, went about shewing it to his relatives, friends, and neighbours for the charge of a penny each sight. Evil days, however, unfortunately overtook him, and he was obliged to part with his loved coin. Soon after, a neighbour called on him, and asked a sight of his sovereign, at the same time tendering a penny. 'Ah, man,' says he, 'I hae'nt it noo; but I'll lat ye see *the cloutie it was row't in* for a bawbee.'"

I have often been amused with the wonderful coolness with which a parishioner announced his canny care for his supposed interests when he became an elder of the kirk. The story is told of a man who had got himself installed in the eldership, and, in consequence, had for some time carried round the ladle for the collections. He had accepted the office of elder because some wag had made him believe that the remuneration was sixpence each Sunday, with a boll of meal at New Year's Day. When the time arrived he claimed his meal, but was told he had been hoaxed. "It may be sae wi' the meal," he said coolly, "but I took care o' the saxpence mysel'."

There was a good deal both of the *pawky* and the *canny* in the following anecdote, which I have from an honoured lady of the south of Scotland:—"There was an old man who always rode a donkey to his work, and tethered him while he worked on the roads, or wherever else it might be. It was suggested to him by my grandfather that he was suspected of putting it in to feed in the fields at other people's expense. 'Eh, laird, I could never be tempted to do that; for my cuddy winna eat onything but nettles and thristles.' One day my grandfather was riding along the road, when he saw Andrew Leslie at work, and his donkey up to the knees in one of his clover fields, feeding luxuriously. 'Hollo! Andrew,' said he; 'I thought you told me your cuddy would eat nothing but nettles

and thistles.' 'Ay,' said he, 'but he misbehaved the day; he nearly kicket me ower his head, sae I pat him in here just to *punish* him.'"

The following, from a provincial paper, contains a very amusing recognition of a return which one of the itinerant race considered himself conscientiously bound to make to his clerical patron for an alms:—"A beggar while on his rounds one day this week, called on a clergyman (within two and a half miles of the Cross of Kilmarnock), who, obeying the Biblical injunction of clothing the naked, offered the beggar an old top-coat. It was immediately rolled up, and the beggar, in going away with it under his arm, thoughtfully (!) remarked, 'I'll hae tae gie ye a day's *hearin*' for this na.'"

The "crack i' the kirkyard," has been already referred to. The following shews that a greater importance might be attached to this privilege than was done even by the servant lass mentioned above. A rather rough subject residing in Galloway, used to attend church regularly, as it appeared, for the *sake* of the crack in the churchyard. For on being taken to task for his absenting himself, he remarked, "There's nae need to gang to the kirk noo, for everybody gets a newspaper."

The natural and self-complacent manner in which the following anecdote brings out in the Highlander an innate sense of the superiority of Celtic blood is highly characteristic:—A few years ago, when an English family were visiting in the Highlands, their attention was directed to a child crying; on their observing to the mother it was *cross*, she exclaimed, "Na, na, it's nae cross, for we're baith true Hieland."

The late Mr. Grame of Garsock, in Strathearn, whose grandson already "is laird himsel," used to tell, with great *unction*, some thirty years ago, a story of a neighbour of his own of a still earlier generation, Drummond of Keltie, who, as it seems, had employed an itinerant tailor

instead of a metropolitan artist. On one occasion when a new pair of inexpressibles had been made for the laird, they were so tight that after waxing hot and red in the attempt to try them on, he *let out* rather savagely at the tailor, who calmly assured him, "It's the fash'n; it's jist the fash'n." "Eh? ye haveril, is it the fashion for them *no to go on?*"

An English gentleman writes to me:—"We have all heard much of Scotch caution, and I met once with an instance of it which I think is worth recording, and which I tell as strictly original. About 1827, I fell into conversation, on board of a Stirling steamer, with a well-dressed middle-aged man, who told me he was a soldier of the 42nd, going on leave. He began to relate the campaigns he had gone through, and mentioned having been at the siege of St. Sebastian—'Ah! under Sir Thomas Graham?' 'Yes, sir; he commanded there.' 'Well,' I said, merely by way of carrying on the *crack*, 'and what do you think of *him*?' Instead of answering, he scanned me several times from head to foot, and from foot to head, and then said in a tone of the most diplomatic caution, 'Ye'll perhaps be of the name of Grah'm yersell, sir.' There could hardly be a better example, either of the circumspection of a real canny Scot, or of the lingering influence of the old patriarchal feeling, by which 'A name, a word, makes clansmen vassals to their lord.'"

Colonel Erskine, the father of the celebrated lawyer, and the grandfather of Dr. John Erskine of this city, no less celebrated as a divine, was quite a character in his day. He was of a very choleric temper, of which some racy anecdotes are told in Sir Henry Moncrieff's life of Dr. J. Erskine. He had an old servant of the true caste. On one occasion he had done something that very much displeased his master. The Colonel's wrath became quite uncontrollable, his utterance was choked,

and his countenance became pale as death. The servant grew somewhat uneasy, and at last said, 'Eh! sir, maybe an aith would relieve you."

Now, when we linger over these old stories, we seem to live at another period, and in such reminiscences we converse with a generation different from our own. Changes are still going on around us. They have been going on for some time past. The changes are less striking as society advances, and our later years have less and less alterations to remark. Probably each generation will have fewer changes to record than the generation that preceded; still every one who is tolerably advanced in life must feel that, comparing its beginning and its close, he has witnessed two epochs, and that he looks on a different world from one which he can remember. To elucidate this fact has been my present object, and in attempting this task I cannot but feel how trifling and unsatisfactory my remarks must seem to many who have a more enlarged and minute acquaintance with Scottish life and manners than I have. But I shall be encouraged to hope for a favourable, or at least an indulgent sentence upon these Reminiscences, if to any of my readers I shall have opened a fresh insight into the subject of social changes amongst us. Many causes have their effects upon the habits and customs of mankind, and of late years such causes have been greatly multiplied in number and activity. In many persons, and in some who have not altogether lost their national partialities, there is a general tendency to merge Scottish usages and Scottish expressions into the English forms as being more correct and genteel. The facilities for moving, not merely from place to place in our own country, but from one country to another, the spread of knowledge and information by means of periodical publications and newspapers, and the incredibly low prices at which literary works are produced, must have great effects. Then there is the

improved taste in art, which, together with literature, has been taken up by young men who, fifty, sixty, seventy years ago, or more, would have known no such sources of interest, or, indeed, who would have looked upon them as unmanly and effeminate. When first these pursuits were taken up by our Scottish young men, they excited in the north much amazement, and, I fear, contempt, as was evinced by a laird of the old school, who, the first time he saw a young man at the pianoforte, asked, with evident disgust, "Can the creature sew ony?" evidently putting the accomplishment of playing the pianoforte and the accomplishment of the needle in the same category. The greater facility of producing books, prints, and other articles which tend to the comfort and embellishment of domestic life, must have considerable influence upon the habits and tastes of a people. I have often thought how much effect might be traced to the single circumstance of the cheap production of pianofortes. An increased facility of procuring the means of acquaintance with good works of art and literature, acts both as cause and effect. A growing and improved taste tends to stimulate the *production* of the best works of art. These, in return, foster and advance the power of forming a due *estimate* of art. In the higher department of music, for example, the cheap rate of *hearing* compositions of the first class, and of *possessing* the works of the most eminent composers, must have had influence upon thousands. The principal oratorios of Handel may be purchased for as many shillings each as they cost pounds years ago. Indeed, at that time the very names of those immortal works were known only to a few who were skilled to appreciate their high beauties. Now associations are formed for practising and studying the choral works of the great masters. In connection, however, with this subject, I may notice here that a taste for that most interesting style of music, the pure Scottish, is in some

quarters becoming a matter of reminiscence. Of reminiscence I mean so far as concerns the enthusiasm with which it was once esteemed and cultivated amongst us. I do not speak so much of the *songs* of Scotland, which can never lose their charm, although of them even some are growing fast out of the acquaintance of the younger members of society; but I refer more particularly to the reels and strathspeys, which with many Scotch persons have become nearly quite obsolete. When properly performed, it is a most animating and delightful strain—not of a refined or scientific class, but joyous and inspiriting. It has a peculiar character of its own and requires to be performed with a particular and *spicy* dexterity of hand, whether for the bow or the keys. Accordingly, young ladies used to take lessons in it as a finish to their musical education. Such teaching would now, I fear, be treated with contempt by many of our modern fair ones. I recollect at the beginning of the present century, my eldest sister, who was a good musician of the school of Pleyel, Kozeluch, Clementi, etc., having such lessons from Nathaniel Gow, a celebrated reel and strathspey performer. Nathaniel was the son of Neil Gow, who was the most eminent performer and composer of the pure Scottish dance music. A correspondent, who knew Neil Gow, and was inquiring after him at his cottage the day of his death, in 1807, has kindly communicated a characteristic anecdote:—Neil was rather addicted to the whisky bottle. On walking home to Dunkeld, one night, from *Perth*, where he had engaged, as usual, to play the violin at some ball, upon being asked, next day, how he had got home, for it was a long walk, and he was very tipsy, replied, "that he didna mind the length o' the road; it was the *breadth* o' it that he cast oot wi'!"—under the recollection of his having knocked about from side to side. At the close of the last century Neil's celebrity might be said to

rival that of Burns; and Neil's strathspeys were on a par with the songs of Robby. But alas! that celebrity and popularity are becoming matters of reminiscence with the few. With the rising generation the name has passed away. It is a pity. Even still, let a good strathspey performer begin to play such tunes, for example, as "Up an' Waur them a', Willie," "Brig o' Dee," "Reel o' Tulloch," "Loch Eric Side," or "Monimusk," and every countenance brightens with animation.

We must acknowledge that the love of Scottish music used to be with some of the older generation a very *exclusive* taste, and that they had as little sympathy with the admirers of Italian strains as such admirers could have with theirs. I have been supplied with an amusing illustration of this intolerance—A family belonging to the Scottish Border, after spending some time at Florence, had returned home, and proud of the progress they had made in music, the young ladies were anxious to shew off their accomplishments before an old confidential servant of the family, and accordingly sung to her some of their finest Italian songs which they had learned abroad. Instead, however, of playing them a compliment on their performance, she shewed what she thought of it by asking with much naïvete, "Eh, mem, do they ca' skirling like yon *singing* in foreign parts?"

There are many causes in operation to produce changes in taste, habits, and associations, amongst us. Families do not vegetate for years in one retired spot as they used to do; young men are encouraged to attain accomplishments, and to have other sources of interest than the field or the bottle. Every one knows, or may know, everything that is going on through the whole world. There is a tendency in mankind to lose all that is peculiar, and in nations to part with all that distinguishes them from each other. We hear of wonderful changes in habits and customs where change seemed impossible.

In India and Turkey even, peculiarities and prejudices are fading away under the influence of time. Amongst ourselves, no doubt, one circumstance tended greatly to call forth, and, as we may say, to *develop*, the peculiar Scotch humour of which we speak—and that was the familiarity of intercourse which took place between persons in different positions of life. This extended even to an occasional interchange of words between the minister and the members of his flock during time of service. I have two anecdotes in illustration of this fact, which I have reason to believe are quite authentic. In the church of Banchory on Deeside, to which I have referred, a former minister always preached without book, and being of an absent disposition, he sometimes forgot the head of discourse on which he was engaged, and got involved in confusion. On one occasion, being desirous of recalling to his memory the division of his subject, he called out to one of his elders, a farmer on the estate of Ley, "Bush! (the name of his farm) Bush, ye're sleeping." "Na, sir, I'm no sleeping—I'm listening." "Weel, then, what had I begun to say?" "O, ye were saying so and so." This was enough, and supplied the minister with the thread of his discourse; and he went on. The other anecdote related to the parish of Cumbernauld, the minister of which was, at the time referred to, noted for a very disjointed and rambling style of preaching, without method or connection. His principal heritor was the Lord Elphinstone of the time, and unfortunately the minister and the peer were not on good terms, and always ready to annoy each other by sharp sayings or otherwise. The minister on one occasion had somewhat in this spirit called upon the beadle to "wauken my Lord Elphinstone," upon which Lord E. said, "I'm no sleeping, minister." "Indeed you were, my lord." He again disclaimed the sleeping. So as a test the preacher asked him, "What had I been saying

last then?" "Oh just wauken Lord Elphinstone." "Ay, but what did I say before that?" "Indeed," retorted Lord Elphinstone, "I'll gie ye a guinea if ye'll tell that yersell, minister." We cannot imagine the *possibility* of such scenes taking place amongst us in church now. It seems as if all men were gradually approximating to a common type or form in their manners and views of life; oddities are sunk, prominences are rounded off, sharp features are polished, and all is becoming amongst us smooth and conventional. The remark, like the effect, is general, and extends to other countries as well as to our own. But as we have more recently parted with our peculiarities of dialect, oddity, and eccentricity, it becomes the more amusing to mark *our* participation in this change, because a period of fifty years shews here a greater contrast than the same period would shew in many other localities.

I have already referred to a custom which prevailed in all the rural parish churches, and which I remember in my early days at Fettercairn; the custom, I mean, now quite obsolete, of the minister, after pronouncing the blessing, turning to the heritors, who always occupied the front seats of the gallery, and making low bows to each family. Another custom I recollect:—When the text had been given out, it was usual for the elder branches of the congregation to hand about their Bibles amongst the younger members, marking the place, and calling their attention to the passage. During service another handing about was frequent amongst the seniors, and that was a circulation of the sneeshin mull or snuff-box. Indeed, I have heard of the same practice in an episcopal church, and particularly in one case of an ordination, where the bishop took his pinch of snuff and handed the mull to go round amongst the clergy assembled for the solemn occasion within the altar rails.

Amongst "reminiscences" which do not extend beyond

our own recollection, we may mention the disappearance of Trinity Church in Edinburgh, which has taken place within the last fifteen years. It was founded by Mary of Gueldres, queen of James II. of Scotland, in 1446, and liberally endowed for a provost, prebendaries, choristers, etc. It was never completed, but the portions built, viz., choir, transept, and central tower, were amongst the finest specimens of later Gothic work in Scotland. The pious founder had placed it at the east end of what was then the North Loch. Like Lady Glenorchy, she chose her own church for the resting-place of her remains as a sanctuary of safety and repose. A railway parliamentary bill, however, overrides founders' intentions and Episcopal consecrations. Where once stood the beautiful church of the Holy Trinity, where once the "pealing organ" and the "full-voiced choir" were daily heard "in service high and anthems clear"—where for 400 years slept the ashes of a Scottish Queen, now resound the noise and turmoil of a railway station.

In our reminiscences of many *changes*, which have taken place during fifty years in Scottish manners, it might form an interesting section to record some of the peculiarities which *remain*. I mean such peculiarities as yet linger amongst us, and still mark a difference in some of our social habits from those of England. Some Scottish usages die hard, and are found here and there for the amusement of southern visitors. To give a few examples, persons still persist among us in calling the head of the family, or the host, the *landlord*, although he never charged his guests a half-penny for the hospitality he exercises. In games, golf and curling still continue to mark the national character—cricket was long an exotic amongst us. In many of our educational institutions, however, it seems now fairly to have taken root. We continue to call our reception rooms "*public* rooms," although never used for any but domestic purposes.

Military rank is attached to ladies, as we speak of Mrs. Lieutenant Fraser, Mrs. Captain Scott, Mrs. Major Smith. On the occasion of a death, we persist in sending circular notices to all the relatives, whether they know of it or not—a custom which, together with men wearing weepers at funeral solemnities, is unknown England. Announcing a married lady's death under her maiden name must seem strange to English ears—as, for example, we read of the demise of Jane Dixon, spouse of Thomas Morison. Scottish cookery retains its ground, and hotch-potch, minced collops, sheep's head singed, and occasionally haggis, are still marked peculiarities of the Scottish table. These social differences linger amongst us. But stronger points are worn away, eccentricities and oddities such as existed once will not do now. One does not see why eccentricity should be more developed in one age than in another, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that the day for real oddities is no more. Professors of colleges are those in whom one least expects it—grave and learned characters, and yet such *have* been in former times. We can scarcely now imagine such professors as we read of in a past generation. Take the case of no less distinguished a person than Adam Smith, author of the *Wealth of Nations*, who went about the streets talking and laughing to himself in such a manner as to make the market women think he was deranged; and he told of one himself who ejaculated as he passed, "Hech sirs, and he is weel pat on, too!" expressing surprise that a decided lunatic, who from his dress appeared to be a gentleman, should be permitted to walk abroad unattended. Professors still have their crotchets like other people; but we can scarcely conceive a professor of our day coming out like Adam Smith and making fishwives pass such observations on his demeanour. There are changes which the dignified muse of history will scarcely condescend to record or notice; and are

perhaps better described in idle gossip like this than by the historic page; and this made me remark, as an introduction to the record of these anecdotes, that personal recollections and reminiscences might be extremely valuable in describing those lighter variations of society which do not come properly within the scope of history. For instance, the story told in Lockhart's life of Sir W. Scott, of the blacksmith whom Sir Walter had formerly known as a horse doctor, and whom he found at a small country town south of the Border, practising medicine with a reckless use of "laudamy and calomy," apologising at the same time for the mischief he might do, by the assurance that it "would be lang before it made up for Flodden," most graphically describes the interest felt by Scotchmen of his rank in the incidents of their national history. A similar example has been recorded in connection with Bannockburn. Two English gentleman visited the field of that great battle, and a country blacksmith pointed out with much intelligence the positions of the two armies, the stone on which was fixed the Bruce's standard, etc. The gentlemen, on leaving, pressed his acceptance of a crown piece. "Na, na," replied the Scotsman, with much pride, "it has cost ye eneuch already." Such an example of self-denial on the part of a Scottish cicerone is, we fear, now entirely a "reminiscence."

In further illustration of these remarks, we may refer to the bearing of some old-fashioned language upon past national historical connections. Thus, from some words which are quite domesticated throughout Scotland, we learn how close, at one time, must have been our alliance with France, and how much influence must have been exercised upon general society by French intercourse. Scoto-Gallic words were quite differently situated from French words and phrases adopted in England. With us they proceeded from a real admixture of the two *peoples*. With us they were of the ordinary common

language of the country, that was from a distant period moulded by French. In England the educated and upper classes of late years *adopted* French words and phrases. With us, some of our French derivatives are growing obsolete as vulgar, and nearly all are passing from fashionable society. In England, we find the French-adopted words rather receiving accessions than going out of use.

Examples of words such as we have referred to, as shewing a French influence and admixture, are familiar to many of my readers. I recollect some of them in constant use amongst old-fashioned Scottish people, and those terms, let it be remembered, are unknown in England.

A leg of mutton was always, with old-fashioned Scotch people, a gigot (Fr. *gigot*).

The crystal jug or decanter in which water is placed upon the table, was a caraff (Fr. *carafe*).

Gooseberries were groserts, or grossarts (Fr. *groseille*).

Partridges were pertricks,—a word much more formed upon the French *perdrix* than the English partridge.

The plate on which a joint or side-dish was placed upon the table, was an ashet (Fr. *assiette*).

In the old streets of Edinburgh, where the houses are very high, and where the inhabitants all live in flats, before the introduction of soil-pipes there was no method of disposing of the foul water of the household, except by throwing it out of the window into the street. This operation, dangerous to those outside, was limited to certain hours, and the well-known cry which preceded the missile and warned the passenger, was gardeloo! or, as Smollett writes it, gardy loo (Fr. *garde de l'eau*).

Anything troublesome or irksome used to be called, Scottice, fashious (Fr. *facheux, facheuse*); to fash one's-self (Fr. *se facher*).

The small cherry, both black and red, common in

gardens, is in Scotland, never in England, termed gean (Fr. *guigne*), from Guigne, in Picardy.

The term dam brod, which has already supplied materials for a good story, arises from adopting French terms into Scottish language, as dams were the pieces with which the game of draughts was played (Fr. *dammes*).

A bedgown, or loose female upper garment, is still in many parts of Scotland termed a jupe (Fr. *jupe*).

In Kincardineshire the ashes of a blacksmith's furnace had the peculiar name of smiddy-coom (Fr. *écume, i.e.*, dross).

Oil, in common Scotch, used always to be ule,—as the uley pot, or uley cruse (Fr. *huile*).

Many of my readers are no doubt familiar with the notice taken of these words by Lord Cockburn, and with the account which he gives of these Scottish words derived from the French, probably during the time of Queen Mary's minority, when French troops were quartered in Scotland. I subjoin a more full list, for which I am indebted to a correspondent, because the words of it still lingering amongst us are in themselves the best Reminiscences of former days.

Scotch.	English.	French.
Serviter	Napkin	From Serviette.
Gigot (of mutton)	..	,, Gigot.
Reeforts	Radishes	,, Raiforts.
Groserts	Gooseberries	,, Groseilles.
Gardyveen	Case for holding wine	,, Garde-vin.
Jupe	Part of a woman's dress	,, Jupe.
Bonnaille	A parting glass with a friend going on a journey	,, Bon aller.
Gysart	Person in a fancy dress	,, Guise.
Dam-brod	Draught-board	,, Dammes.
Pantufles	Slippers	,, Pantoufles.
Haggis	Hashed meat	,, Hachis.
Gou	Taste, smell	,, Gout.
Hogou	Tainted	,, Haut gout.
Grange	Granary	,, Grange.
Mouter	Miller's perquisite	,, Mouture.
Dour	Obstinate	,, Dur.
Douce	Mild	,, Doux.

Scotch.	English.	French.
Dorty	Sulky	From Dureté.
Braw	Fine	,, Brave.
Kimmer	Gossip	,, Commère.
Jalouse	Suspect	,, Jalouser.
Vizzy	To aim at, to examine	,, Viser.
Ruckle	Heap (of stones)	,, Recueil.
Gardy-loo	(Notice well known in Edinburgh)	,, Gardez l'eau.
Dementit	Out of patience, deranged	,, Dementir.
On my verity	Assertion of truth	,, Verité.
By my certy	Assertion of truth	,, Certes.
Aumrie	Cupboard	,, Almoire, in old French.
Walise	Portmanteau	,, Valise.
Sucker	Sugar	,, Sucre.
Edinburgh street cry :—"Neeps like sucker.		Whae'll buy neeps?" (turnips).
Petticoat-tails	Cakes of triangular shapes	From Petits gatelles (gateaux).
Ashet	Meat-dish	,, Assiette.
Fashious	Troublesome	,, Facheux.
Prush, Madame[1]	Call to a cow to come forward	,, Approchez, Madame.

[1] This expression was adopted apparently in ridicule of the French applying the word "Madame" to a cow.

CONCLUSION

In all these details regarding the changes which many now living have noticed to have taken place in our customs and habits of society in Scotland, this question must always occur to the thoughtful and serious mind, Are the changes which have been observed for *good?* Is the world a better world than that which we can remember? On some important points changes have been noticed in the upper classes of Scottish society, which unquestionably are improvements. For example, the greater attention paid to attendance upon public worship,—the disappearance of profane swearing and of excess in drinking. But then the painful questions arise, Are such beneficial changes *general* through the whole body of our countrymen? may not the vices and follies of one grade of society have found a refuge in those that are of a lower class? may not new faults have taken their place where older faults have been abandoned? Of this we are quite sure, no lover of his country can fail to entertain the anxious wish, that the change we noticed in regard to drinking and swearing were universal, and that we had some evidence of its being extended through all classes of society. We ought certainly to feel grateful when we reflect that in many instances which we have noticed, the ways and customs of society are much improved in common sense, in decency, in delicacy, and refinement. There are certain modes of life, certain expressions, eccentricity of conduct, coarseness of speech, books, and plays, which were in vogue amongst us, even fifty or sixty years ago, which would not be tolerated in society at the present time. We cannot illustrate this

in a more satisfactory manner than by reference to the acknowledgment of a very interesting and charming old lady, who died so lately as 1823. In 1821, Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone, grand-aunt of Sir Walter Scott, thus writes, in returning to him the work of a female novelist which she had borrowed from him out of curiosity, and to remind her of "auld lang syne:" "Is it not a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?" There can be no doubt that at the time referred to by Mrs. Keith, *Tristram Shandy*,[1] *Tom Jones*, *Humphrey Clinker*, etc., were on the drawing-room tables of ladies whose grandchildren or great-grandchildren never saw them, or would not acknowledge it if they *had* seen them. But authors not inferior to Sterne, Fielding or Smollett, are now popular, and who can describe the scenes of human life with as much force and humour, and yet there is nothing in their pages which need offend the taste of the most refined, or shock the feelings of the most pure. This is a change where there is also great improvement. It indicates not merely a better moral perception in authors themselves, but it is itself a homage to the improved spirit of the age. We will hope that, with an improved exterior, there is improvement in society within. If the feelings shrink from what is coarse in expression, we may hope that vice has, in some sort, lost attraction. At any rate, from what

[1] Sterne, in one of his letters, describes his reading *Tristram Shandy* to his wife and daughter—his daughter copying from his dictation, and Mrs. Sterne sitting by and listening whilst she worked. In the life of Sterne, it is recorded that he used to carry about in his pocket a volume of this same work, and read it aloud when he went into company. Admirable reading for the Church dignitary, the prebendary of York! How well adapted to the hours of social intercourse with friends! How fitted for domestic seclusion with his family!

we discern around us, we hope favourably for the general improvement of mankind, and of our own beloved country in particular. If Scotland, in parting with her rich and racy dialect, her odd and eccentric characters, is to lose something in quaint humour and good stories, we will hope she may grow and strengthen in *better* things—good as those are which she loses. However this may be, I feel quite assured that the examples which I have now given of Scottish expressions, Scottish modes and habits of life, and Scottish anecdotes, which belong in a great measure to the past, and yet which are remembered as having a place in the present century, must carry conviction that great changes have taken place in the Scottish social circle. There were some things belonging to our country which we must all have desired should be changed. There were others which we could only see changed with regret and sorrow. The hardy and simple habits of Scotsmen of many past generations,—their industry, economy, and integrity, which made them take so high a place in the estimation and the confidence of the people amongst whom they dwelt in all countries of the world. The intelligence and superior education of her mechanics and her peasantry, combined with a strict moral and religious demeanour, fully justified the praise of Burns when he described the humble, though sublime piety of the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, and we can well appreciate the testimony which he bore to the hallowed power and sacred influences of the devotional exercises of his boyhood's home, when he penned the immortal words :—

> "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs
> That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

These things, we hope and trust, under the Divine blessing, will never change, except to increase, and will never become a question of reminiscences for the past. If Scotland has lost much of the quaint and original character of former lawyers, lairds, and old ladies, much of the

pungent wit and dry humour of sayings in her native dialect, she can afford to sustain the loss if she gain in refinement, and lose not the more solid qualities and more valuable characteristics by which she has been distinguished. If the peculiarities of former days are partially becoming obsolete, let them at least be preserved. Let our younger contemporaries, let those who are to come, know something of them from history, as we elders have known something of them from experience. The humour and the point cannot all be lost in their being recorded, although they may lose much. I still hope to see this carried on farther by others, as I am convinced great additions could be made to these reminiscences, which I have endeavoured to preserve. Changes of this nature in the habits and language of a nation are extremely interesting, and it is most desirable that we should have them recorded as well as those greater changes and revolutions which it is the more immediate object of history to enrol amongst her annals. And, whether the changes of which we are now treating mark the deterioration or improvement of manners, useful lessons and important moral conclusions may be drawn from these narratives of the past. Causes are at work which must ere long produce still greater changes, and it is impossible to foresee what will be the future picture of Scottish life, as it will probably be now becoming every year less and less distinguished from the rest of the world. But if there shall be little to mark our national peculiarities in the time to come, we cannot be deprived of our reminiscences of the *past*. I am interested in everything which is Scottish. I consider it an honour to have been born a Scotchman. And I make no secret in acknowledging that I take pride in my family and ancestral Scottish associations. One fair excuse I have to offer for entertaining a proud feeling on the subject, one proof I can adduce, that a Scottish lineage is considered a legitimate

source of self-congratulation, and that is the fact that I never in my life knew an English or Irish family with Scottish relations, where the members did not refer with much complacency to such connection.

I seem to linger over these Reminiscences as if unwilling to part for ever with the remnants of our past national social history. But I will crave permission to add in parting the following anecdotes :—The first of them I had received long ago, but I delayed its introduction till this time, because some reasons existed against bringing it forward, which have only lately been removed. It should be preserved—as I know many competent judges consider it as *the* choice specimen of our past Scottish wit and humour. The story is this : The late Sir William Maxwell of Monreith, grandfather of the present baronet, and brother of Jane Duchess of Gordon, was a remarkable specimen of the old Scottish laird—shrewd, humorous, and somewhat rough. The Earl of Galloway of the time had just been appointed Lord Lieutenant of the county, and Sir William, rather against the grain, had consented to pay his respects to him, and he went over on a Monday morning. The visit passed off smoothly ; but as Sir William was coming away, the Earl said, in a rather patronising tone, " I am very glad to see you, Sir William ; but you are not perhaps aware that I have a day *of my own* for receiving. I set apart Fridays for seeing my county friends, and shall be glad always to see you on that day, whenever you will honour me with a call." Sir William was a good deal nettled at this, as he thought it a hint against his present visit, and answered with some asperity, " My lord, I ken but ae Lord wha has a day o' his ain, and, God forgie me, I dinna keep that day ; but d—— me if I keep yours." The other two I received since these sheets were committed to the press. They were sent to me from Golspie, and are original, as they

occurred to my correspondent's own experience. The one is a capital illustration of thrift; the other of kind feeling for the friendless in the Highland character. I give the anecdotes in my correspondent's own words:— A little boy, some twelve years of age, came to me one day with the following message, "My mother wants a vomit from you, sir; and she bade me say if it will not be strong enough, she will send it back." "Oh, Mr. Begg," said a woman to me, for whom I was weighing two grains of calomel for a child, "dinna be so mean wi' it; it is for a poor fatherless bairn."

In this volume I finally take my leave of *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*, not because I think the subject has been exhausted, or that fresh fields of inquiry might not be opened; but having accomplished the particular object I had in view, I would now leave to others to collect further materials for elucidating the manners and habits of our grandfathers. To one at all advanced in years, the retrospect of life is but a melancholy office, and suggests many painful topics for his reflection. The changes which he marks in the world around him, the sad blanks which time has made in his own social circle, remind him very forcibly of the marked uncertainties of an earthly condition; and when, during the same period, he is called upon to notice how greatly manners, customs, and language have themselves been altered, the world in which he now lives seems scarcely the *same* world as that which he can remember. We have been retracing footprints of the past, and I can truly say it is the love of my country which has induced me to dwell so long and so minutely upon certain peculiarities by which I can myself remember it to have been more marked and more distinguished than it is at present. The task, perhaps, will be called a useless one,—the labour to no good end. Why, it may be asked, retain any longer a memory of these national peculiarities? Scotland has

become a portion of a great empire; she is not now a separate nation, but has become *part* of a nation more powerful and distinguished than anything recorded in her own past history. She has lost her individuality, and must be satisfied to take that integral position for evermore. It may be so; but this I humbly think offers no reason why we should forget our former national greatness and independence. Scotland *once* formed a distinct kingdom from England, and as we can still point to a remnant of a Regalia which belonged to a separate and independent CROWN, memory will cling to peculiarities which still tell of a separate and independent People.

Scotchmen (at least such as are worthy of the name) have always been noted for their love of country. When sojourning in distant lands, recollections of Scotland bring with them something of that *maladie du pays* to Scotchmen, which is said so often to visit the hardy Swiss, when in exile, thoughts of his mountain home are brought back to his recollection.

There is something quite touching in the attachment of Scotchmen to the old Scottish ways and remembrances of their early days. No example of this feeling has ever struck me more than the story told of old Lord Lovat, which is amongst the many touching anecdotes which are traditionary of his unfortunate period. On his return from the Westminster Hall, where he had been condemned to death for his adherence to the Stuart cause, he saw out of the coach window a woman selling the sweet yellow gooseberries, which recalled the associations of youth in his native country. "Stop a minute," cried the old scoffer, who knew his days on earth were numbered; "stop a minute, and gie me a ha'porth of *honey blobs*," as if he had gone back in fond recollection to his schoolboy days in the High Street of Edinburgh, when honey blobs had been amongst the pet luxuries of his young life.

Independent of personal feelings, it must always be interesting to mark the features which distinguish one people from another, or to note the causes which are rendering those distinctions less prominent and less striking than they *once* were ; and if we are destined soon to lose all indications of a national existence, let us note, ere they vanish, the lingering traces of our past individuality. We do no wrong surely in cherishing our love for Scotland, or in retaining a deep interest in all that is still left to Scotland. A Scotchman may have his pride and boast in being the countryman of those who won the fields of Agincourt and Cressy, but without losing the deeper recollection of being a descendant of those who fought at Bannockburn and Flodden. His heart will swell when he sees the great and noble of the land pass before him decorated with the blue ribbon and the garter of that ancient order of knighthood, the St. George of England. But does there not spring up a warmer interest when his eye rests upon the green ribbon and the thistle badge of poor Scotland's order of St. Andrew ? A Scotchman may pay all due homage to the genius of a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Gibbon, and yet indulge a more home and heartfelt pride in the literary achievements of a Buchanan, a Walter Scott, and a Macaulay. Religious differences cannot quench the national feelings of a Scotchman towards the piety and the stern sincerity of Presbyterian Scotland. Nor will any Scottish Episcopalian—even the most attached to his own form of polity and worship—ever fail to pay his tribute of respect and admiration to the old Scottish elder of a simpler creed, or ever cease to feel a Scotchman's national pride in the stern and unbending piety of men who maintained, at the hazard of life and property, the Covenant which they had signed with their blood. We feel assured that such feelings and such emotions are, in their tendencies, favourable to the human character.

But we go further than this. We are disposed to say there is a *deficiency* in that mind—a *want* in that temperament and disposition, where no responsive feelings are called forth at the name of country,—where no emotions of pride are awakened at a remembrance of its former triumphs and its past glories,—where no indignation attends a sense of its wrongs,—and no sorrow is poured forth for its humiliation. We have at least the authority of our own Walter Scott for this opinion. In the often-quoted passage from the *Lay*, with what energy he pours forth his contempt for one so utterly selfish? With what earnest and scornful feeling does his minstrel ask the question—

> "Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land!
> Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
> As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
> From wandering on a foreign strand!"

With deep indignation does he return the answer which he thinks such a character deserves—

> "If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
> For him no minstrel raptures swell;
> High though his titles, proud his name,
> Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
> Despite those titles, power and pelf,
> The wretch, concentered all in self,
> Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
> And, doubly dying, shall go down
> To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
> Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung."

Such language, it may be said, is the effusion of poetical enthusiasm; and belongs rather to the departments of fancy and imagination than to those of reason and the actual business of life. But, let it be remembered, genuine poetry will ever draw its best appeals and its most stirring inspirations from the *truths* and *realities* of human existence. Scott was a true poet; but no man took more sagacious views of life and character—no man more

acutely marked the peculiarities of his fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen. In this case his language is in accordance with experience. He touches upon patriotism as a virtue and excellence of our nature, and as leading men to what is good. And he was right.

Love of country must tend to make men cherish a desire for its welfare and improvement. To claim kindred with the honourable and high-minded, as in some degree allied with them, must imply at least an *appreciation* of great and good qualities. Whatever supplies men, therefore, with a motive for following upright and noble conduct—whatever advances in them a kindly spirit of benevolence towards fellow-creatures in distress—whatever promotes an increasing spirit of charity and forbearance towards sincere and earnest Christians of a creed differing from their own—whatever stimulates men to enrich their country by institutions favourable to the cultivation of science, literature, art, and social economy, *must* have a beneficial effect upon the hearts and intellects of a Christian people—and these objects are, I think, all more or less fostered and encouraged under the influence of that patriotic spirit which identifies national honour and national distinction with its own.

INDEX

ABERCAIRNIE, Laird of, 245
Aberdeen dialect, 135, 136
Aberdeen Provost's dinner-party, 139
Aberdeen, wife of Provost of, 138
Aberdeenshire Roman Catholic Priest, 51, 52
A' body kens that when I got ye for my wife, I got nae beauty. Yer frien's ken that I got nae siller; and if I dinna get God's grace, I shall hae a puir bargain, indeed, 44
A bonnie bride's sune buskit, 159
Adam, Dr., 103
A deviled turkey, 97
Ae, ae, but oh I'm sare hadden doun wi' the bubbly jock, 209
Æsthetic movement in religion, 29
A fair drinker, 66
Affecting story of an idiot boy, 217
A gentleman was no the waur for being able to tak' a gude glass o' whisky, 68
Agh, it's sair cheenged times at Castle Grant, when gentlemens can gang to bed on their ain feet! 76
A gravesteen wad gie guid bree gin ye geed it plenty o' butter, 194
A great broon pig, 128
A horse *the length* of Highgate, 126
Aiblins a hunner, 191
Aiblins ye're no sae popular i' the parish as me, 225
Alexander, Dr. W. Lindsay, 93
Allardice, Rev. Alex., of Forgue, 22
An I hadna been an idiot I wad hae been sleeping, too, 208
An it hadna been for that, there would hae been twa toom kirks this day, 229
And ye've as muckle need, sir, 177
Ane o' them's grippit me fine, 110
Anecdote of a Scotch farmer and a Cheshire reaper, 244, 245
Anecdote of David Hume, 57
Anecdote of Dr. Lockhart of Glasgow, 48, 49
Anecdote of Dr. Poole and the servant girl, 97
Anecdote of Mr. M—— of Glasgow, 37, 38
Anecdote of Mrs. Grant of Kilgraston and her servant, 95
Anecdote of the battle of Preston, 111
Anecdote of the elder of the kirk at Muthill, 35, 36
Anecdote of the Glasgow shoemaker and his wife, 41
Anecdote regarding the herd of swine in the gospel, 56
Angel worship is not allowed in the Church of Scotland, 50
Angus and Aberdeen dialects, 135
Angus, Earl of, Bell the Cat, 164
Angus laird and the London merchant, 61, 62
Angus old ladies, 101
Angus words used by old people, 127
Anither gude Sunday! I dinna ken when I'll get thae drawers red up, 38
Anither het day, Cornal, 108
Annals of the Parish, 55, 175
Answers of servants illustrating habits and manners of the time, 91
Ants' nest, 233
A peerie wee bit o' a manikinie, 131
Are na ye Hume the atheist? 57
Are ye ane o' the toon council? 124
Are ye no Rabbie H———'s man? 149, 150
Are yer aits muckle bookit th' year? 245
Argyle, Duke of, and the Edinburgh magistrates, 126
Armadale's, Lord, dinner party, 243
A rowin' stane gathers nae fog, 234
Asher, Rev. Mr., of Inveraven, 206
Astronomical speculation, 171
Athole, Duke of, and the Perth writer, 26
Athole, Duke of, the late, 187
Attendance by clergymen at theatrical representations, 53, 54
Attendance of parish idiots at funerals, 209
Auld lang syne, 102

Auld, Rev. Dr., of Ayr, and Rab Hamilton, 213, 214
A-weel, a-weel, but ye maun prescribe some other method for me to get quit o' the sair throat, 120
Aweel, gudewife, then the less I lee, 132
A! what it is to be wise! to ken it's no a meer's shoe! 211
Ay, a' *ae* oo, 108
Ay, ay, sir, but indeed it was yoursell began it, 228
Aye, but fatten fat Thamas Thamson, 137
Ay, but it's nae suner aff than it's on again, 85
Ay! ir ye a' up and awa? 33
Ay, mony a ane has complained o' that hole, 177
Ay, she may prosper, for she has baith the prayers of the good and the bad, 100
Ay, sir, whare ye gaun? 84
Ay, yon beast kens weel it is the Sabbath day, 38

Baad whusky, 38
Back-speired, 132
Bacon, Lord, quotation from, 150
Bailie ———'s eldest son, 124
Baird, Mrs., of Newbyth, and her son, 113
Balfour's edition of Ray's Proverbs, 151
Balgray, Lord, 149
Balnamoon's "waile o' wigs" on Munrimmon Muir, 182; speat o' drinking, 184
Bannockburn, 203, 262
Barclay, Dr., 249
Barclay, Mr., of Ury, 146
Beddle or betheral, 224-228
Beattie, Dr., Scotticisms designed to correct improprieties of speech and writing, 125
Beddle-looking bodies, 224
Bell, 'oman, turn back an' gie me yer bit fuppie, for the breet's stannin' i' the peel wi' ma, 139
Bellman story, 218
Bend weel to the Madeira at dinner, 65
Bestial, 127
Betheral stories, 219, 224-228
Bethune, Dr., of Dornoch, 246, 247
Black sheep or white sheep, 238
Blair, Rev. Mr., of Dunblane, contributions of, 195, 196, 221
"Boaty" of the Dee at Banchory; his idea of a perfect gentleman, 86
Boggendreep, 171
Boiled beef and greens, 179
Boswell, Mr., of Balmuto, anecdote of, 62
Boswell, James, falling into a habit which still prevails in Scotland, 62
Braxfield, Lord, 147
Brougham, Lord, on Scottish language, 103, 104
Brown, George, Lord Coalstoun, 184
Brown, Rev. John, of Haddington, 224
Brown, Rev. John, of Whitburn, 33, 221
Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, 21
Buccleuch, Duchess of, and the farmer, 179
Builder's view of church differences, 29
Burial-place in Edinburgh, mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in *Guy Mannering*, 32
Burns, Robert, 74, 156, 174
Burnett, Bishop, *Memoirs of my own Time*, 20
Bush, ye're sleeping, 258
But, Captain, whaur's Miss Ketty? 69
But isna he a queer man, that doctor; he'll neither speak to God nor man, 221
But, lordsake, laird, will no the world see *him*? 193
But, Lord, hoo tired the fowk whiles are, 230
But my minnie dang, she did tho', 190
But the bodies brew the braw drink, 189
Byron, quotation from Don Juan, 165

Caldwell papers quoted, 131
Campbell, Mrs., of Ardnave, 96
Campbell of Combie, 178
Campbell of Jura, anecdote, 181
Canine misbehaviour in church, 227, 228
Canny, 250, 252
Can she make good collops? 120
Can the creature sew ony? 255
Carlyle, Dr., 53; Memoirs of, 49, 78
Carnegy, Miss Helen, of Craigo, 60, 117, 121
Carry any ladies that call up stairs, 97
Cathkin's Covenant, 169
Cauld airn, 57
Cauld kail het again, 45

Celebration of the Lord's Supper in country parishes, 54, 55
Cemeteries, 33
Chalmers, Dr., and his congregation in the West Port, 58
Chambers' *Domestic Annals*, 18
Chambers, William, contributions, 213
Changes in religious observances, 24, 25, 266
Changes in Scottish language, 100
Chesterfield, Lord, on proverbs, 150
Children's diseases, 130
Chisholm, Mrs., of Chisholm, 128
Christmas and Martinmas, 187
Church architecture, a new era, 26-29
Church attendance, 24
Church decoration, 26-29
Church discipline in the Presbytery of Lanark, 43
Churchyard gossip, 91, 92
Clark, Mr., of Dalreoch, and Mr. Dunlop, 221
Class of persons sprung up, quite unknown in the old Scottish times, 57
Clephane, depute-advocate, 66
Clerk-Rattray, the late Baron's opinion of betherals, 225
Clerk's, John, translation of the motto of the Celtic Club, 141; anecdote of, 141, 142
Clock, 130
Coalstoun dining-room window, 184
Cockburn, Lord, and the shepherd, 35
Cockburn, Lord, Memorials, 20, 65, 71, 75, 112, 119, 121
Come awa, granny, 181
Come back, Jock, and let in the noble family of Eglantine, 51
Come oot and see a new star that hasna got its tail cuttit aff yet, 176
Convivial habits, 61
Cook, Dr., of Haddington, 46, 120
Cook, Dr., of St. Andrews, 221
Corb, 185, 186
Corehouse, Lord (Cranstoun), 65
Coutts, John, anecdote of, 67
Craigmyle's breeks, 185
Cry a'thegither, that's the way to be served, 89
Cumming, Dr. Patrick, 78
Cumming, Miss Jean, of Altyre, 107
Cunninghame, Lady Elizabeth, 237
Cure for a sore throat, 120
Custom of precentors repeating the lines of the psalm before they were sung, 51
Custom of the minister bowing to the heritors in the front gallery seats, 49, 50
Cut off mine to-morrow morning when I dress, 144

Daft circuit, 66
Daft Will Speir, 209, 212
Daft Yedie, 216
Dale, David, 95
Dalhousie, Christian, Countess of, reminiscences, 184
Dam-brod pattern, 128
Dance music of Scotland, 256
Deaf lady and the Marquis of Lothian, 245, 246
Death of Mrs. Dunlop, 202
Deed, Robby, then, ye needna be sae nice, he'll juist tak' ye as ye are, 119
Deed, sir, if I'm no mista'en, I saw "thirdly and lastly," fa' ower the poopit stairs, 248
Deeside farmer and the bottle of vinegar, 220
Deeside humorists, 86
Deeside stories, 184
Deevil choke them, 221
Destruction of the cutty stool, 42, 43
Dewar, David, and the prison chaplain, 192
Dialects, 135
Dickson, Dr. David, anecdote of a Scottish termagant, 230, 231
Diminutives, Scottish, use of, 131, 132
Dining hours, 74
Dinna be so mean wi' it, 271
Discreet, 127
Disruption in the Church of Scotland, 29
Dod, sir, they were saying ye had preached an auld sermon to-day, 45
Do I look as like a fool in my pigtail as Billy Cream does? 144
Dog stories, 51
Domestic servants, 83-98
Donald, I dinna think thae lads would stan' us, 215
Douglas Peerage, 147 *note*
Do ye venture? 44
Dr. Bonum Magnum, 78
Drawing an inference, 227
Drinking anecdotes, 62
Drinking Angus laird and the London merchant, 61, 62
Drinking fair, 61, 66
Drinking habits, 61
Drinking habits at funerals, 68

Drinking parties, 74, 75
Duckinfield (Sir Nathaniel) and the "ill-natured" stories of Montrose, 31
Dun, Finlay, 117
Dunbar, Sir Archibald, 100
Dundas, Henry, Viscount Melville, and Mr. Pitt, 126
Dundonald, Laird of, his funeral, 69
Dundrennan, Lord, and the basket-woman, 209
Dunlop, Rev. Walter, of Dumfries, 231, and his presents, 200-202
Dunmore, Lord, and his *pigtail*, 144
Dunse, Dull, and Drone parishes, 19
D'ye think, sir, I dinna ken my ain groats in ither folk's kail? 196

Eating (anecdote of a "full-eating laird"), 81, 82
Ech, sirs! what a nicht for me to be fleeing thro' the air, 114
Edinburgh magistrates and the "dukes and fools," 126
Eglinton Papers quoted, 168, 209
Eh, if I could win at him, I wud rax the banes o' him, 203
Eh, Miss Jeany, ye have been lang spared, 118
Eh, man, your psalm-buik has been ill bund, 231
Eh, mem, do they ca' skirling like yon singing? 257
Eh, our minister had a great power o' watter, 225
Eh? ye haveril, is it the fashion for them *no to go on*? 253
Elder, old Scottish, different from modern, 35
Elizabeth and the lang grace and nae meat, 181
Embellishment of churchyards and cemeteries, 32, 33
Enterteening, 127
Erskine, Colonel, and his old servant, 253, 254
Erskine, Henry, 243
Erskine, Miss, of Dun, 101, 115
Erskine, Mr., of Dun, 84
Erskine, Mr., of Linlathan, 21
Erskine, William, 65
Esther, ye hae nae gotten the spune? 116

Fa' ever heard o' a merchant i' the toon o' Montrose *ha'in'* an *eldest son*? 124
Fail, 129
Faith, there'll soon be mair hats nor heads, 193
Family prayer, practice of, 30
Fan he's had time to curse a fyllie, I'se warran' he'll seen be well eneuch, 248
Fasque dining-room, 110
Fat did he dee o'? 136
Fat for should I gang to the opera, just to creat a confeesion, 138
Father Abraham, how are you to-day? 192
Fatten fat Thamas Thamson, 137
Fencing the *deil*, 240
Fencing the tables, 42
Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, 151, 154-156
Ferguson, W., Poems, 136
Feudal system, modification in, 92
Fife, Lord, and his idiot retainer, 211, 212
Fill it up, mem; an inch at the tap's worth twa at the bottom, 77
Fin' a fardin for yersell, puir body, 188
Finnan haddies, 136 *note*
Fleeman, Jamie, the laird of Udney's fool, the life and death of, 211
Forfarshire lady and her servant Andrew, 90
Formerly rubbers, noo thieves, 141
Fond o' my landlord! 116
Forbes, Sir William, anecdote, 27; Memoirs of a banking-house, 67
Frae the ire o' the Drummonds, gude Lord deliver us, 172
Frail, 129
Fraser's Magazine, 194
French words and phrases used in Scotland, 263-265
Fullerton, Mrs. Captain, and her servant Lizzy, 97, 98
Funeral customs in Carluke in 1790, 198
Funerals, Highland, 68, 69

Gaelic clergy, 68
Galloway lairds, 77
Galt's *Annals of the Parish*, 175
Games, 260
Gardenstone, Lord, 142; his pet pig, 144; his love of snuff, 144
Garskadden 's been wi' his Maker these twa hours, 80
Get up! I wadna rise out o' my chair for King George himsell, 124
Gey impudent o' him, I think, 114
Gilchrist, Dr., and his parishioner, 234
Gillespie, Professor, 239-241

Gin onybody asks if I got a dram after't, what will I say ? 212
Give a Chartist a large estate, and a copious supply of ready money, and you make a Conservative of him, 250
Glasgow Cathedral, 28
Glasgow first regiment of volunteers, 215
Glenorchy, Wilhelmina, Viscountess, her church and resting-place, 237, *note*
Golf and curling, 260
Gordon, Alexander, fourth Duke of, 59
Gordon, Lady Susan (afterwards Duchess of Manchester), 59
Gordon, Jane, Duchess of, and the Laird of Craigmyle, 185 ; anecdote, 98
Gordon, Mr., of Rothy, and Jock Muilton, 214
Gordon, Priest, 52
Gow, Nathaniel, 256
Gow, Neil, 256, 257
Grame, Mr., of Garsock, 252
Grave-diggers, parochial, 228
Greyfriars' Church, 28
Gregory, Mr., of Banchory, 45
Grippit a chiel for the powny, 109
Grippy, 109
Gude coorse country wark, 226

Habit of naming individuals from lands in their occupation or possession, 170
Habits of snuffing and smoking, 80, 81
Haddock, 136
Haddo's Hole precentor, 226
Had it no been for the fashion o' the thing, I micht as weel hae been on my ain feet, 210
Had Skinner been of carnal mind, etc., 242
Hae, 81
Hae ye ony coonsel, man ? 148
Hamilton the sma sma laird, 186, 187
Handel's oratorios, 255
Harmony of the four Gospels, 230
Harvest, thanksgiving for, 236
Hats in the Episcopal Chapel of Laurencekirk, 143
Hech, man, div ye no ken there's aye maist sawn o' the best crap ? 91
Hech, sir, but ye've made thae yins shift their quarters, 195
Hech, sirs ! and he is weel pat on, too, 261
He didna sweer at onything parteecular, 26
He has got his kail through the reek, 130
He is awfu' supperstitious, 130
Henderson's Scottish Proverbs, 151
He nearly kicket me ower his head, sae I pat him in there just to *punish* him, 252
Henny pig and green tea, 138
Henry, Rev. Dr., and his colleague Dr. Macknight, 229
Here's t'ee, the ordinary form of drinking health, 73
Hermand, Lord, 65, 66, 75, 76, 129, 149, 150
He's ane o' my poor roll ; I gied him a shilling just last Sabbath, 222
He said the Lord could hae had little to do when he made me, 96
He smells damnably of the halbert, 216
He's just back the road there a bit, choking some geese till a man, 221
He turned Seceder afore he de'ed, an' I buried him like a beast, 53
Heugh, Rev. John, of Stirling, 223
He was drowned i' the Red Sea, 137
Highland funerals, 67-69
Highland literal obedience to orders, 96, 97
Holy communion, changes in administration of, 55
Holy minister ! congregation ! O my head maun be cuttit aff, 207
Home, John, 49 ; epigram, 243
Honest, 129
Honest men and bonny lasses, 178
Honest woman, what garr'd ye steal your neighbour's tub ? 129
Hoot, jabbering bodies, wha could *understan'* them ? 124
Hoot o fie, hoot o fie, John ; would you have the young folk strip to the serk ? 199
Hoot, she's i' the kirkyard, 248
Hoot, sir, is that a' ? 240
Hout, he canna speak ; he means 'fau too, fau too, 139
Hout, minister, I could haud him up an' he were a twa-year-auld stirk, 44
Hout, my lady, what would he be duin' wi' an arm chair ; he's just deein' fast awa ? 39
Hout, Sandy, I'm no dune, 86
Hume, David, 49 ; rehearsing the Creed, 57 ; his wee bukies, 131
Hummelcorn discourse (*i.e.*, a poor sermon), 101.

Humour in children, 179
Humorist minister and hearer, 233
Huntly, Lord, and Captain Innes of the Guards, 193

I AM going to send the young laird abroad, 193
I am Saul, the son of Kish, seeking his father's asses, 192
I am the hangman of Stirling, sir, 249
I aye keepit the house for him, whether he was hame or awa, 94
I can bear ony pairtings that may be ca'ed for in God's providence; but I canna stan' pairting frae my claes, 123
I debar all those who use such minced oaths as faith! troth! losh! gosh! and lovanendie! 42
I didna ken ye were i' the toun, 101
Idiots, 205
I doot some o' ye hae ta'en ower mony whey porridge the day, 202
I doubt it's treating, and may be ca'd bribery, 105
I fell all my length, 95
If he could do such a thing when he was drunk, what might he not have done when he was sober? 76
If I am spared, 119
If I dinna gang, I'll tell thon, 181
I first read a' the pleadings, and then, after letting them wamble in my wame wi' the toddy twa or three days, I gie my ain interlocutor, 141
If the French land at Ayr, there will soon be plenty of Volunteers up at Cumnock, 197
If the kirk is ower big, just sing mass in the quire, 166
If the parritch-pan gangs at that, what will the kail-pat gang for? 111
If there's an ill text in a' the Bible, that creetur's aye sure to tak it, 47
If they'd mair, it would want a' their time to the spending o't, 195
If ye dinna ken whan ye've a gude servant, I ken whan I've a gude place, 85
If ye had been a sheep ye wad hae had mair sense, 35
If ye'll tak the tane I'll tak the tither, 35
If ye're dead I'll no expect ye, 119
If you had tried my plan, and come doon to your *knees*, ye wad mabe hae come mair speed, 223
I grippit a chiel for the powny, 109
I hae buried an auld wife, and I've just drucken her, hough and horn, 219
I hae cuistn't my coat and waistcoat, and faith I dinna ken how lang I can thole my breeks, 91
I haen't it noo; but I'll lat ye see *the cloutie it was row't in for a bawbee*, 251
I have long learned not to fear the face of man, 148
I just fan a doo in the redd o' my plate, 82
I keep a'thing in my shop but calf's tether pins and paper sermons for ministers to read, 223
I like thae sermons best that jumbles the joodgement, 250
I'll be in on Monanday, God willin' and weather permittin,' an' on Tiseday, *fither or no*, 125
I'll do that, my lord, there's just twa o' them, 90
I'll draw to a close in the prayer when I hear the haam fizzin', 201
I'll hae tae gie ye a day's hearing for this, na, 252
I'll hang ye a' at the price, 204
I'll no say but it may, speciallie baad whusky, 38
I'll tak the wee ane, 214
Illumination in Edinburgh in 1786, 193
I maun just gae doun to the garden and say mi bit wordies, 52
I'm awfu' tired wi' carryin', 218
I'm mending the ways of Bathgate, 223
I'm no surprised at it, considering the trash that comes aff your stamach in the morning, 190
I'm unco yuckie to hear a blaud o' yer gab, 100
Indeed, Dauvid, an' ye had been in this parish, ye might hae said it at your leesure, 233
Indeed, I maun hae a lume that'll *had in*, 183
Indeed, mem, ay, sae it is; for ye see the gude lad's winding sheet was ower lang, and I cut aff as muckle as made twa bonny mutches, 39
Indeed, minister, there's mair leears in Peebles than me, 208

Indeed, my leddy, they lay every day, no excepting the blessed Sabbath, 38
Indeed, sir, I'm just as little the better, 115
Indeed, there's neither men nor meesic, and fat care I for meat, 138
I never big dykes till the *tenants* complain, 197
I never could raise a man for mysel', and I'm no gaen to raise men for King George, 123
Inglis, Mr., clerk of Court of Session 193
In my situation ! and whan were ye in my situation ? 117
Innes, Captain, of the Guards, 193
I only want an interpreter to make me understand what your Lordship says, 148
Inquisitiveness, national, 176, 177
Irving, Edward, 232
I saw him step awa, but I didna like to disturb gude company, 80
I'se warrant ye he understands; he's *sharping* his teeth, 96
I should like to know who is the head of this house, 236
I shuld nae hae thocht it lang an' I'd been sitting on thorns, 235
Is it lawful at ony time, to tell a lee ? 206
I soupit the poupit, 81
Is your ladyship inclined to take fish ? 246
Italian singing, 257
I think, mistress, a cheese in the ither en' wad mak a gran' balance, 201
I think we wadna be the waur of some water, 64
I thought I'd lost the minister a' thegither, 123
It just put me in min' o' our geese at Dunjarg, 55
It may be sae wi' the meal, but I took care o' the saxpence mysel', 251
I told them they were a pack of infernal villains, 216
It's a braw time for the cannel makers when the king is sick, honest man ! 193
It's a great pity, it spoils the boot, 217
It's no my wig, Hairy, lad, 182
It's no the day to be speering sic things, 36
It stoors in an oor, 101
It will be lang to the day when ye hae onything o' this kind to do, 202
It wou'dna gang *wast* in spite o' me, 107
I've a coo noo, 250
I've cheated the Seceders, 213
I've had the sma'pox, the nirls, the blabs, the scaw, the kinkhost, and the fever, the branks and the worm, 130
I wad hae thocht naething o't had houses been a new invention, 142
I wadna care sae muckle about stablin' my beast inside, but it's anither thing mysel' gain' in, 223
I wadna gie my single life for a' the double anes I ever saw, 91
I wadna gie the crack i'the kirkyard for a' the sermon, 92
I was e'en thinkin' it was gayan *toom*, 221
I winna be back-spiered, noo, Pally Fullerton, 132
I would *hae* naething to say to thae impious vessels, 122
I would rather trust my soul in God's mercy than trust Keir's head into their hands, 59
I wunner whaur that is, 95

Jacobite anecdotes, 58-60
James, the notes are not correct, 178
Jeems Robson, ye are sleeping, 43
Jemmy, fat was the hinner end o' Pharaoh, 137
Jemmy, you are drunk, 189
Joe M'Pherson, 40
John, carry that dog out, 227
John, I saw a brock gang in there, 200
Johnstone, Miss, of Westerhall, 114
Johnstone, Rev. Mr., of Montquhitter and the piper, 220
Judges, Scottish, 139

Kail, 129
Kames, Lord, 145
Kay's Portraits, 140 *note*, 149
Kean, Charles, 54
Keith, Mrs., of Ravelstone, 267
Kelly's Scottish Proverbs, 151, 152
Kemble in *Macbeth*, remark on by a Scotch farmer, 127
Kilspindie, the laird of, and the laird of Tannachy-Tulloch, 171
Kind sir, it's for your courtesie, etc., 243
King George the Third's opinion of Mr. Barclay of Ury, and Lord Monboddo, 146

Kinloch, Lord, 95, 218
Kirkwood, Miss, Bothwell, 207

Ladies, old Scottish, 101
Laird of Logan, 196, 197
Lamb, Charles, on Scottish wit, 173, 174
Lass wi' the braw plaid, mind the puir, 36
Laudamy and calomy, 261
Lauderdale, Duke of, 203
Lauderdale, Earl of, and his son, 244; and the fool, 218
Lawson, Rev. Dr. George, of Selkirk, 223
Lay of the Last Minstrel, extract from, 274
Layal, Jamie, and the turkeys, 88
Leeve! hoo could she leeve? 119
Leslie, Rev. Mr., of Morayshire, 222
Let her down, Donald, man, for she's drunk, 105
Let's pree't, 148
Letter from an old Montrose lady to her niece in England, and reply, 132-135
Liston, Sir Robert, 106
Long sermons, 233
Lord pity the chiel that's chained to our Davy, 113
Lothian, Marquis of, and his workmen, 89, 90
Lovat, Lord, 272

M'Cubbin, Rev. Dr., 148
Macaulay, Lord, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, 18
Mackenzie, Henry, anecdote, 70
Mackenzie, Mr., of Muirtown, 52
MacNabb, Miss, of Bar-a'-Chaistril, 178
Macknight, Rev. Dr., and his colleague Dr. Henry, 229
Macnab, Laird of, and his horse, 185
Macneil, Lady, 38
Ma new breeks were made oot o' the auld curtains, 181
Man, John, you should never drink except when you're dry, 223
Man, ye're *skailing* a' the water, 122
Many a time has he threatened to come down with me, and I kenned he would keep his word some day, 197
Matheson, Priest, 52
Matthews, Charles, 229
Maule, Mr., and the Laird of Skene, 63
Maxwell, Sir William, of Monreith, and the Earl of Galloway, 270
Maybe an aith might relieve him, 247
Maybe some o' ye wad be sae kin' as to gie me a cast oot in a dandy-cart, 202
Me, and Pitt, and Pitfour, 98
Mearns, words used in the, 127
Me hird! I dinna ken corn frae gerse, 209
Melville, Viscount, anecdote, 126
Mem, winna ye tak the *clock* wi' ye, 130
Menzies of Pitfodels, 52
Midlothian Scotch, 129, 130
Military rank attached to ladies, 261
Miller, Mr., of Dalswinton, 50
Mi mou's as big for puddin' as it is for kail, 220
Mind ye tell him *the house is freed*, 40
Minister's daughter on the cutty stool, 42
Miss S———'s compliments, and she dee'd last nicht at aicht o'clock, 97
Monboddo, Lord, 144; his speculations regarding the origin of the human race, 145; in the Court of King's Bench, 146
Montrose ladies, 132
Montrose lady's protest against the use of steamboats, 122; her reason for not subscribing to the Volunteer fund, 123
Montrose, provost of, and the old lady, 116
Mony thanks, mem, I dinna need it, 179
Moral feeling improved, 74
Motherwell on Proverbs, 151
Mr. Broon, what gars your horse's tail wag that way, 222
Much about it, my Lord, 144
Mure, Mrs., of Caldwell, and David Hume, 131
Murray, Mrs., of Abercairney, and the salt spoon, 87
Murray, W. H., of Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, 54
Music, Scottish, 255-257
My cuddy winna eat onything but nettles and thristles, 251
My lady, gie us less o' your mainers, and mair o' your siller, 237
My Lord, Pickle's no weel, 90
My mother wants a vomit from you sir, 271

Na, but it's the same whup, 185
Na, but ye'll aiblins *bite me*, 105

Nae doot he might be a peer, but it would be a peer o' anither *tree*, 142
Na, Janet, deil as muckle as that 't ever ye saw, 190
" Na," " Naa," " Naaa," 108
Na, na, he's no just deep, but he's drumly, 103
Na, na, I dinna serve the deevil ; I serve ae single lady, 91
Na, na, I never knew onybody killed wi' drinking, 64
Na, na, I never write onything o' consequence, 113
Na, na, it's nae cross, for we're baith true Hieland, 252
Na, na, minister, juist ye come up wi' me, 206
Na, na, my leddy, I druve ye to your marriage, 85
Na, na, them at drink by themsells may just fish by themsells, 87
Na, na, they cam t' me wi' auld kists, and I sent them away i' new anes, 249
Na, sir, we dinna like him ; he's nae soun', 22
National inquisitiveness, 176, 177
Neaves, Lord, 18
Neebour, wad ye sit a bit wast ? 107
Nelson's signal at Trafalgar, 202
Nelly, ye'll gang to Lady Carnegy's and mak my compliments, 122
Newbattle servants, 90
Newcastle, Duke of, and the Provost of Edinburgh, 126
Nichol in his shirt sleeves, 91
No a rántin', tantin', tearin' wind, but a noohin', soughin', winnin' wind, 42
No anither drap ; neither het nor cauld, 78
Noo, Major, you may tak our lives, but ye'll no tak our middens, 100
Noo, Mr. Jeems, let drive at them, just as they are, 195
Noo, Mrs. Scott, ye hae spoilt a', 95
Nor stand in sinners' way, 51
North British Review, 169
Now, gentlemen, fah tee, fah tee, 139

Occasions, 54
Od, Charlie Brown, what gars ye hae sic lang steps to your front door ? 184
O, doctor, doctor ! ye'll kill me, 207
Od, I daursay I *wull* tak anither gless, 199
Od, ye're a lang lad ; God gie ye grace, 115
Oh, doggie, doggie, and div ye live wi' your uncle tae, that ye are sae thin ? 218
Oh, he's a whistlekirk minister, 28
Oh, I hae seen the pretty man, 217
Oh, I wush that I was dry, 229
Oh, mem, it's verra enterteening, 127
Oh, Mr. Divet, 121
Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord, 25
Oh, verra good, mem ; it's just some strong o' the apple, 220
Oh, we are all safe now, 160
Oh yes, but he speaks English, 112
Old Scottish domestic servant, 83-98
Old Scottish ladies, 101
Olim marte nunc arte, 141
O, man, the tolls were unco high, 238
O, man, Wattie, if you have a wardrope in your wame, I wish you could vomit me a pair o' breeks, 111
O, man, will ye sit doun, and we'll see your new breeks when the kirk's dune, 232
O my head maun be cuttit aff, 207
On the contrary, sir, 177
Ony dog micht sune become a greyhound by stopping here, 189
Oo ? ay, a' *ae* oo', 108
Oo, jest what gars your tongue wag ; it's fashed wi' a *wakeness*, 222
Oor Jean thinks a man perfect salvation, 118
Organs and liturgies, 27, 28
Origin and progress of language, 145 *note*
O, she's fine, I hae ta'en her tae Banchory, 248
Ou ay, gasped the sufferer, Lord be thankit, a' the bunkers are fu', 212
Ou ay, it's a cauf, 140
Ou ay, man ; senselessly ceevil, 118
Ou ay, ye ken a body when he *has onything*, 211
Ou ay, you're a' keen aneuch to get me anither wife, but no yin o' ye offers to gie me anither cow, 235
Ou, I liket it a' the better, 98
Ou, it's varra bonny, varra bonny, 27
Ou mem, it's Jock, 96
Our minister had a great power o' watter, 225

Ou, ony time atween ten and twa, 198
Ou, priest, fat's come o' the auld pyet ? 52
Our John sweers awfu', 26
Our Watty Dunlop, 231
O weerie o' the toom pouch, 215

Parish idiots, anecdotes of, 205-215, 216, 217
Patronymic of Dochart, 224
Paul, Rev. Dr., of St. Cuthbert's, 205
Paul, Saunders, an innkeeper at Banchory, 63, 75
Paul's girdle, 180
Peculiarities yet remaining, 260
Penurious laird and the beggar, 188
Perth, Lady, and the French gentleman, 115
Peterhead Sentinel, 194
Peter's letters, 55
Pig, 127
Plugging, 80
Polkemmet, Lord, anecdote, 104, 140
Poor auld bodies could be nae terror to onybody, 227
Porteous Mob, 126
Porter, a wholesome drink, 63
Prayer for wind, 41
Preaching matches at sacramental solemnities, 55
Press the jeelies ; they winna keep, 93
Priest Matheson, 52
Professions of religion, 48
Pronunciation, 131
Property qualification, 250
Prophet's chalmer, 236
Proverbial expressions, 150
Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland, 151
Public censure from the pulpit, 42
Public rooms, 260

Quaint intimation from the pulpit, 219

Rab Hamilton and Dr. Auld of Ayr, 213, 214
Raiment fit, 180
Ramsay, Allan, Scots Proverbs, 151, 156-158, 162
Ramsay, Sir A., and Jamie Layal, 88
Ramsay, Sir George, and Corb, 185, 186
Ramsays, Miss, of Balmain, 120
Rankin, Mr., of Carluke, 198
Rax me a spaul o' that bubbly jock, 102
Ray's English Proverbs, 151
Reason for accepting the office of eldership, 251
Received from Mr. —— by the hands of the hangman of Stirling, *his doer*, the sum of ———, 249
Religious feeling among the Scottish peasantry, 31
Religious feelings and religious observances, 24-60
Remember Mr. Tamson ; no him at the green, but oor ain Mr. Tamson, 222
Resisting the deevil, 235, 236
Rhubarb tart, 179
Ripin' the ribs, 102
Ritchie, Dr., of St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, 239
River Dochart and the M'Gregors, 224
Robertson, Principal, and the country minister, 64, 65
Robbie A'thing, 223
Rockville, Lord, 147
Roxburghe, John, Duke of, 126
Russell, Mr., of Blackha', 86
Rutherford, Lord, and the Bonaly shepherd, 34

Sabbath desecration, 36, 37
Sandford, Bishop, experience of church-going, 25
Sappho, quotation from, 165
Saw't wi' factors, my lord ; they are sure to thrive everywhere, 212
Sax feet in length, 29
Say awa, sir, we're a' sitting to cheat the dowgs, 51
Scoto-Gallic words and phrases, 125
Scot, Dr., of St. Michael's, 55
Scott, Dr., Minister of Carluke in 1770, 199
Scott, Rev. R. A., vicar of Cranwell, 94, 202
Scott, Sir Walter, 18, 111, 143, 165 ; and the Selkirk writer, 65 ; and the old lady, 196 ; quotations from, 25, 126, 132, 161, 162, 274
Scott, Sir Walter, dedication of Waverley Novels, 19
Scottish ballad poetry, 102
——— beadles, 224, 225
——— church discipline, 42
——— conviviality, 61-82
——— cookery, 261
——— dialect, differences of, 139
——— domestic servant, 83-98
——— hospitality, 76
——— household fools, 210-212
——— humour and proverbs, 99

Scottish judges, 139-150
——— ministers, 18
——— music, 255-257
——— nobleman in the Canongate jail, 216
——— stories of wit and humour, 173-265
Sen' for that preaching man frae Livingstone, 244
Sentiments, 71-73
Servant girl's prayer for Mr. Thamson, 222
Servants, old Scottish, 83-98
Shaw, Samuel, 94
Sheep dogs in churches, 51
She juist felled hersel' at Craigo wi' strawberries and cream, 119
She's vicious upo' the wark, 91
She was nae gaeing to hae the fule thing clocking and rinning about in *her* kitchen a' the blessed Sabbath day, 37
Shirra, Mr., the Seceding minister, anecdotes of, 232, 233, 234, 271
Sic a speat of praying, etc., 184
Siddons, Mrs., and the General Assembly in 1784, 53
Silk coat and negligee, 138
Silly, 128
Sinclair, Sir John, observations on the Scottish dialect, 125
Sir, bæeby I'll come farther, 205
Sir, I'm the lad that's to lowse the neckcloths, 70
Sir, ye're breaking something there forbye the stanes, 36
Sir, your hospitality borders upon brutality, 62
Sit in a box drawn by brutes, 146
Skene, Laird of, and Mr. Maule, 63
Skinner, Bishop John, 247
Skinner, Rev. John, 242, 243
Skinner, Rev. John, of Langside, 191, 192, 242
Sleeping in church, 43
Smith, Adam, anecdote of, 261
Smith, Sydney, preaching in Edinburgh, 25; on Scottish "wut," 173
Smollet, 173
Sneck the door, 139
Snuff-taking in Scotland, 80, 81, 259
Solomon would be thocht naething o' noo, 110
Some fowk like parritch, and some like paddocks, 115
Some things I ken, and some I dinna ken, 214
Songs of Scotland, 256
Solon's saying, 166
South Leith Church, 28
Spartan broth, 145
Spring butter, 119
Squabbling among Scottish servants, 96
Stained-glass windows in churches as memorials of the departed, 28
Stewart, Honourable Mrs., and her servant Jeannie, 37
St. Giles' betheral, 226
Stirling of Keir and the miller of Keir, 59
Stirling of Keir, admirable lecture on proverbial philosophy, 151, 158
Stop a minute, and gie me a ha'porth of *honey blobs*, 272
Stop, laird, ye may put *in* what you like, but ye maun tak' naething *out*, 220
Stour out o' the cushion, 225
Strang, Dr., account of Glasgow clubs, 80, *note*
Superstitions, 56
Superstitious, 129
Sup weel at the kail, 224
Suppers in Scotland, 70
Sutherland's, Duke of, funeral, 69
Sutherland, Colonel Alexander, anecdote, 246, 247
Swearing habits, 25
Swearing at lairge, 26
Swine, superstition regarding, 56

Take out that dog; he'd wauken a Glasgow magistrate, 228
Tak' that—Let them fecht wha like, 245
Tak' your *Resurrection*, an' I'll lay my lug ye'll beat every clute o' them, 55
Tam, we're getting auld now; you'll tak' a wife, and when I dee you'll get my share o' the grund, 249
Tastes differ, 203
Tavern suppers, 70
Taylor the manager and his father, 137
That's a lee, Jemmie, 149
That's David Rowse the pleuchman, 180
That's Jenny Fraser's hench-bane, 228
The Aberdonian's sovereign, 250, 251
The bairns to ae house, and the meat to anither, 187
The "crack i' the kirkyard," 92
The *daft* circuit, 66
The deil a ane shall pray for *them* on *my* plaid, 60

The Fife laird and the church plate, 219, 220
The fire's weel eneuch, 95
The gentleman's new bottle companion, 74
The king will come in the cadger's road some day, 222
The king, ye ken wha I mean, 60
The less I lee, 132
Then I'll no gang, 41
Then I'm sure it maun be broon paper, 119
The peer and the sergeant, 215, 216
There'll be a walth o' images there, 27
There may be a difference of sax feet in length, 29
There noo, Andrew, ye ken a' that's in't, 90
There's a man ca'd Chalmers preaches there, and I whiles gang in and hear him, just to encourage him, puir body, 58
There's a whun-buss at your horse's catawstrophe, 241
There's just twa in the dish, and they maun be keepit for the strangers, 96
There's Kinnaird greeting as if there were nae a saunt in earth but himsel' and the king of France, 22
There's nae need to gang to the kirk noo, for everybody gets a newspaper, 92
There's some i' the bottle, mem, 95
There's the wind o' the Murrays, 172
There was a cadger body yestreen, and there's yoursell the day, 176
The sacks of Joseph's brethren were *ripit*, 46
The street rose up and struck me in the face, 147
The tongue no man can tame—James *Third* and *Aucht*, 60
The trade of Glasgow and the outward bound, 63
They neither said ba nor bum, 89
They're a' han' wailed this time, 55
They're shentlemen, an' they wudna rin, 215
They've drunken sax gang o' watter, 67
Thom, Provost, and Miss Carnegy of Craigo, 117
Thomson, Rev. Dr. Andrew, of Edinburgh, 250
Thomson's Acts of Parliament of Scotland, 210
Tired! did ye say, my man; Lord, man, if you're *half* as tired as I am, I pity ye, 197, 198
Toasts and rounds, 73, 74
Todbrae banes, 188
Tractarianism in Scotland, 27
Tragedy of *Douglas*, 53
Trinity College Church, 260
Troth, mem, they're just the gude man's *deed* claes, and there are nane better i' the parish, 39
Try ye him wi' ten, 191
Twa beddle-looking bodies, 224
Tweeddale, Lord, 90
Tytler, Patrick, life, 112, 127

Waile o' wigs, 182
Walth o' images there, 27
Wauken my Lord Elphinstone, 258
We are bits o' Glasgow bodies, 131
We aye think the selvidge the wakest bit o' the wab, 196
Webster, Dr. Alexander, a five-bottle man, 78
We dinna spell watter wi' twa t's, but we spell mainners wi' twa n's, 141
Weel, hoo the deil do ye ken whether this be the road or no? 209
Weel, maister ghaist, is this a general rising, or are ye juist taking a daunder frae your grave by yersell? 232
Weel, minister, what think ye o' this dancing? 199
Weel, noo, ye dinna mean that, 106
Weel, sir, that's the way they spell the name in our country, 224
Weel, sir, that's what I'm aye doin', for I'm never slockin'd, 223
Weels me on your guse face, for deuk's ower little to ca' ye, 127
Weel, then, neist time they shall get *nane ava*, 88
Weel, weel, Jenny, my woman, we'll just pit ye in the Gorbals first, and gin ye dinna lie quiet, we'll try you sine in Stra'ven, 41
We hae a' thing, we're no married, 121
Well, John, I suppose we must go, 98
Well, father, you see what you've driven him to, 49
Well, Saunders, how did you like the sermon to-day? 250
We mak' a dishclout o't, 192
We never absolve *till after three several appearances*, 149

Were not swine forbidden under the law, and cursed under the gospel, 56
Whae's that fau'n, John ? 200
What a big lee ! it's a cauff, 84
What ails ye at her wi' the green gown ? 88
What gars the laird o' Garskadden luk sae gash ? 80
Whatna hummeldoddie o' a mutch hae ye gotten ? 101
What's to become o' the puir whales ? 122
Whaur ? 109
Whaur did ye get that coat ? 214
Whaur's this you're gaun, Robby ? 119
When he was taken there was found in his pocket a volume of your philosophical works, and Boston's *Fourfold State*, 49
When ye get cheenge for a saxpence, it's soon slippit awa, 108
Which half ; the upper or the lower ? 77
Whistlekirk minister, 28
Who is the head of this house ? 236
Wife at the braid mailing, mind the puir, 36
Wightman, Dr., of Kirkmahoe, 50, 202
Will Speir's opinion of the weather, 212
Will ye tell them to bury me whaur I'll lie across at your feet ? 94
Willy, I'm deeing, and as ye'll hae the charge o' a' *I have*, MIND that as much whisky is to be used at my funeral as there was at my baptism, 68
Will ye tak your haddock wi' us the day ? 130
Wilson, John, the vocalist, 117
Wilson, Professor, 175
Wood, Mr., and the bellman of Craigie parish, 218, 219
Wut, Scottish, 173

Ye a' speak sae genteel now, that I dinna ken wha's Scotch, 112
Ye'd soon be kickit out o' that, 110
Ye ken, an' I ken, but, laird, God kens, 53
Ye'll aften see a light peeping through a crack, 232
Ye'll bide here for ten meenonts, and gin naebody comes forrit in that time, ye can gang awa hame, 219
Ye'll only get credit for the *penny*, 219, 220
Ye'll perhaps be of the name of Grah'm yersell, sir, 253
Ye may hae that *profit*, but honour ye hae nane, 124
Ye needna find faut wi' me, Maister Jeems, *I hae been langer about the place than yersell*, 98
Ye're jest an impruived English-man, 205
Yer maist obedient hummil servant, Tannachy-Tulloch, 171
Ye shud hae steekit your nieve upo' that, 171
Ye've been lang Cook, Cooking them, but you've dished them at last, 221
Ye wad nae doubt gie him the offices o' the church, 52
You maunna expect that I am to gang clank clanking through Heeven lookin' for your folk, 40
You must walk first, that I may *see your tail*, 145
You're nae better than Pharaoh, 196
Your Grace maun alloo it's a vara *windy* vegetable, 179
You said my wig wasna kaimed this mornin', my lad, but I think I've redd your head for you, 223

THE END

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